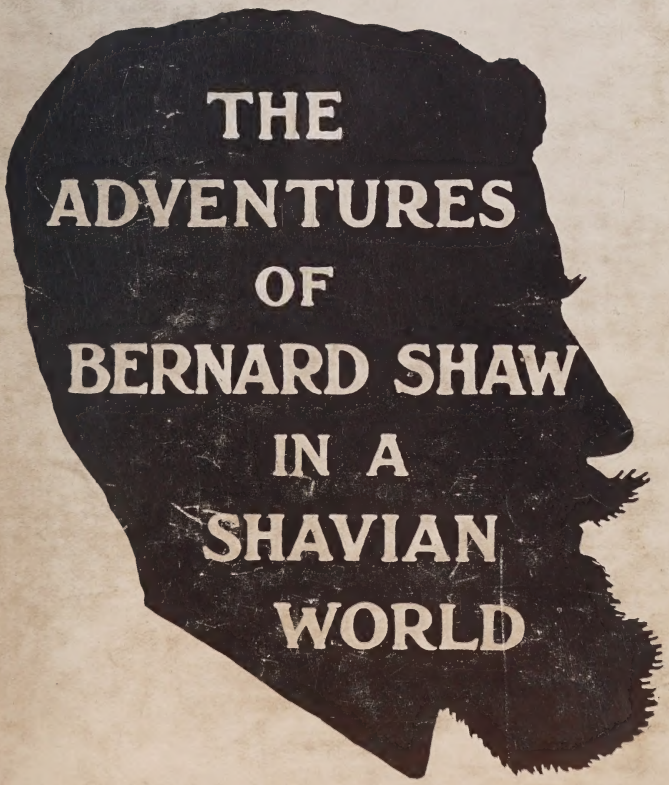
PARADISE FOUND

BY

ALLEN UPWARD



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This extravaganza in dialogue form is not only uproariously funny but is the keenest criticism of the Shavian cult that has so far been written.

Through enchantment, Bernard Shaw is cast into a trance, and in that form is preserved by his followers as a sacred relic. At the expiration of two centuries, he is awakened by a kiss into a world administered entirely on Shavian principles. His disgust with the practical operation of his ideas develops the richest humor.

Everyone who has ever read or seen a Shaw play will enjoy this diverting book.

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PARADISE FOUND

OR

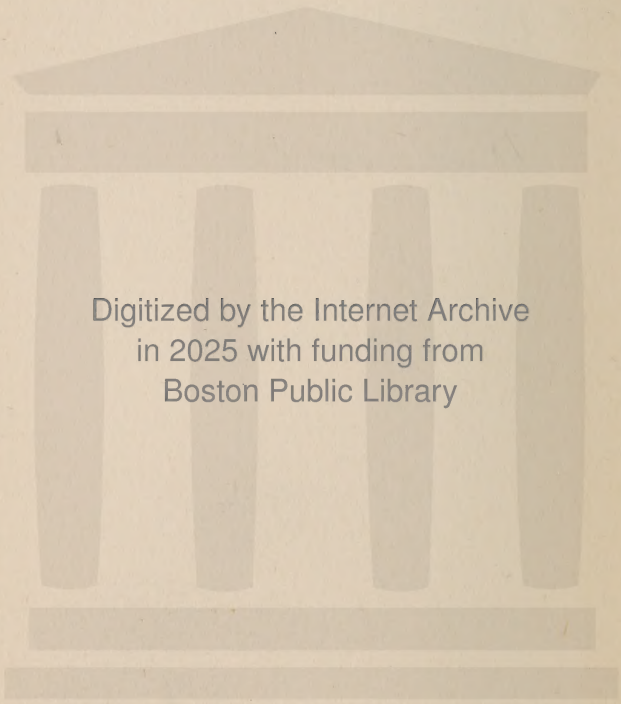
THE SUPERMAN FOUND OUT

IN THREE ACTS

By

ALLEN UPWARD

BOSTON AND NEW YORK
HOUGHTON MIFFLIN COMPANY
1915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ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The playwright desires to return his best thanks to Mr. Bernard Shaw, who generously consented in advance to be introduced on the stage under his own name, and to the Lord Northcliffe, who gave a similar permission as regards the "Daily Mail."

To some readers this may seem an extravagant satire, but the writer's experience hitherto has been that his prophecies are only too surely fulfilled.

PARADISE FOUND

DRAMATIS PERSONA.

MR. BERNARD SHAW — The Superman.

STAGE PUPPETS.

The Marchioness of Holloway, The Lady Wells, The Lord Blatchford, The Lord Keir-Hardie — Of the Most Noble Order of Hereditary Fabians.

H.V.M. Maharajah Sri Singh Mahindar Adhiraj Ranjisinghji Bahadur, K.G. — Viceroy of England.

Munshi of the Viceroy.

The Permanent Prime Ministress.

The Permanent Lady's Maid.

The Physician of South-east Municipal District A. 2.

F.B.O. 109, C.F.I. 2270 — Caretakers of the Shaw Memorial Hall.

Teacher and Pupils (four of whom have speaking parts).

A Mechanical Chairman — Of the Anti-Shavian League.

Comrades and Nurses, etc.

Act I.

INTERIOR OF THE SHAW MEMORIAL HALL.

Act II.

HEAD-QUARTERS OF THE ANTI-SHAVIAN LEAGUE.

Act III.

THE VICE-REGAL CABINET

Time, 24 hours.

Period, 200 years hence.

PARADISE FOUND

ACT I

Stage Directions.

The scene represents the interior of the Shaw Memorial Hall, on the Adelphi Terrace, South-east Municipal District, A. 2. The building is in the Pseudo-Gothic style, with Depraved Edwardian details. A stained glass window at the back represents scenes in the life of Mr. Shaw, among them being the Battle with the Censors, and the Duel with Chesterton.

A small door on the spectator's left communicates with the Fabian Settlement. A larger door on his right opens into the street. Over the inner door is a clock, with the hands pointing to about twenty minutes to twelve.

At the upper end of the hall is a dais guarded by a low gilt railing, in which there is a gate on the left. In the middle of the dais is a couch placed sideways to the audience. Round the couch are grouped five pieces of statuary in the following order from left to right: (1) *A plaster cast of the Venus of Milo;* (2) *A figure representing the popular type of John Bull;* (3) *A group of St. George and the Dragon, reproducing the design on the coinage;* (4) *A statue of Hamlet meditating on the skull;* (5) *A wooden Highlander, life-size, taking snuff from a mull.*

On the couch MR. SHAW *lies in the enchanted sleep into which he was cast by the spell of a wicked Palmist in the pay of the Primrose League on St. George's Day, two hundred years before the Play opens. His head rests on a silken pillow, at the left; the rest of the figure is hidden by a mantle of violet velvet trimmed with a fringe that appears to be of gold. The hair and beard have grown to an abnormal length, as in the case of the Emperor Frederick Barbarossa. With the aid of an opera glass the figure can be seen breathing.*

A glass case stands against the wall between the dais and the street entrance, containing a partly burnt file of the DAILY MAIL.

As the curtain rises Comrades F.B.O. 109 *and C.F.I.* 2270 *are seen dusting the figures on the dais. Both wear the same costume, a simple sanitary one resembling, as closely as the Censor will permit, that worn in the present day by inmates of the labour settlements at Dartmoor and Portland. (If objected to by the Censorship, this costume can be modified in the direction of the Boy Scouts' uniform.) In addition the Comrades wear what look to the audience like iron collars soldered round their necks. (These are supposed to be stamped with their registered number and municipal district.) Round the right arm of F.B.O. is a red band to signify that he is of the inferior sex, as is explained in due course.*[1] *The Comrades speak in the Cockney dialect of the day.*

[1] If this distinction be not found sufficient, the difference between the sexes may be further indicated by means of the hair and beard.

C.F.I. is dusting John Bull. F.B.O. leaving the group of St. George and the Dragon, goes towards the Venus.

C.F.I. You leave er alone. I've told you I won't ave you dust er. It ain't respectable.

F.B.O. Garn ! You talk as if we was living in them bad old Capiterlist days. Don't you know that respectability's been abolished ? And she was one of them what elped to do it.

C.F.I. Ho, yus ! I shouldn't wonder if she ad er reasons, if that was ow she wore er clothes.

F.B.O. You oughter be ashamed, talkin like that. You know as well as I do it wasn't er fault. It was the fashion in that there Twentieth Century. That's ow they went to their dinner parties and dances. Low-necked dresses, they called em.

C.F.I. I dessay ! If they called all that neck, I wonder what they called waist ? I don't care; what I say is that it was all very well for them Primrose Dames to go about like that, but a Suffragette ought to ave dressed erself decent. Why she asn't even a necklace !

F.B.O. An ow do you know that she didn't dress like that on principle ? She may ave bin a Dress Reformer like im. (*Points to the Highlander.*) E ain't got no trousers on.

C.F.I. Ah, but we knows all about im. E was a Labour Member, e was, and e couldn't afford anything more than that.

F.B.O. That's all you know about it. E was the founder of the Boy Scouts, and that was is uniform.

C.F.I. E wasn't.

F.B.O. Look ere; ave you passed the Ninth Standard?

C.F.I. No.

F.B.O. Then don't conteradict me, because I ave.

C.F.I. Ush! Ere comes a class.

The Comrades move aside to the right, and stand looking on.

Enter from the street the Teacher of Standard V in Elementary School VII of South-east Municipal District A. 14. *He looks round the hall, and then gives the following words of command, directing the movements of his class.*

TEACHER. March!—Right wheel!—Left wheel!—Halt!—Right turn!—Attention!—Salute!—Left turn!—Left wheel, march!—Halt!—Left turn!

In obedience to these orders a file of from twelve to twenty children, according as the size of the stage permits, enter from the street, and after saluting MR. SHAW, *as they march past, stand in a line on the left of the audience, facing the Teacher in the centre of the stage.*

Teacher and pupils are dressed like the Comrades, the Teacher and about half the pupils wearing the red band. The line as it comes down to the footlights is headed by a girl, next to whom is a boy without his distinguishing badge. The Teacher carries a wand.

TEACHER. Now let me see how much you know. Who was this ? (*Points to* MR. SHAW.)

VOICES. Comrade A. 1.

TEACHER. What name was he known by in the Capitalist age ?

VOICES. Shaw—Bernard Shaw—Saint George —Lloyd George.

TEACHER. (*Impressively*) Lloyd George Bernard Shaw. Why was he called Saint George ? (*Points to group.*)

FIRST PUPIL. Please, sir, cos e killed the Dragon.

TEACHER. What Dragon ?

FIRST PUPIL. The Dragon what tried to kill im.

TEACHER. Nonsense !—Next girl !—Why don't you answer ?

SECOND PUPIL. I ain't a girl, I'm a boy.

TEACHER. How am I to know that ? Where's your red band ?

SECOND PUPIL. Please sir, I think I must have lost it.

TEACHER. You miserable child ! Do you realize what that means ? Do you know that I shall have to fill up half-a-dozen different forms ? —a declaration that you have lost it, a requisition for your birth certificate, a requisition to the municipal authority, a specification for the clothing department, a certificate to the educational department—and I don't know what beside. It will take months to get another. You must turn up your sleeve meanwhile. (*The pupil does so. The Teacher turns to the next*

pupil.) Do *you* know what the Dragon stands for ?

THIRD PUPIL. Please sir, the Censor.[1]

TEACHER. Well, you know something, but that isn't the right answer. Who can tell me ? (*A hand goes up.*) Well ?

FOURTH PUPIL. (*In the tone of one reciting from memory.*) The Dragon represents the Capitalist System under which all wealth was the monopoly of a favoured few while the masses lived in a state of abject misery and servitude.

TEACHER. Good boy—girl, I mean. Go up. (*The pupil walks with conscious pride to the top of the class.*) And now can any one tell me what happened to him ?

FIRST PUPIL. Please, sir, e was made to sleep.

TEACHER. Hypnotized, you mean. Sleep is not a scientific term. He was cast into the hypnotic state exactly two hundred years ago, while in the act of delivering a speech against the hideous practice of eating cows and sheep and other animals. Who caused him to be hypnotized ?

SECOND PUPIL. The butchers.

TEACHER. (*Impatiently*) Do none of you know ?

FOURTH PUPIL. (*Reciting as before*) It is believed that the crime was the work of an unscrupulous Palmist employed by the enemies of the People.

TEACHER. Good. And who were the enemies of the People ?

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[1] If this be objected to by the Lord Chamberlain it can be altered in the acting version to "the Devil."

THIRD PUPIL. Please, sir, weren't they people, too ?

TEACHER. Nonsense—Next ?

SECOND PUPIL. The cows and sheep.

TEACHER. I am ashamed of you. The enemies of the People—(*Fourth Pupil raises a hand*) Yes ?

FOURTH PUPIL. (*As before*) The idle rich who wasted the earnings of the unhappy wage slaves on vicious amusements such as football, horse-racing and the theatre.—Please, sir !

TEACHER. Yes.

FOURTH PUPIL. Didn't the wage slaves ever amuse themselves as well ?

TEACHER. Hem ! Ah ! I see what you mean. All that will be explained to you when you get into the Ninth Standard.—Now, who is this ? (*Points to Venus.*)

VOICES. Venus—Comrade A. 2.

TEACHER. Who was she ?

FIRST PUPIL. The leader of the Outragettes.

TEACHER. Suffragettes, you mean. And what do you know about her ?

FIRST PUPIL. Please, sir, she ad no arms.

TEACHER. Wrong. Now who can explain to me the meaning of that ? Why is she represented without them ?

SECOND PUPIL. Cos the Government cut em off.

TEACHER. No. This is symbolism. The sculptor means by this to indicate the helpless condition of women before they received the franchise. Now what else can you tell me ?

THIRD PUPIL. By her influence and example she abolished the distinction between the sexes.

TEACHER. Very nearly, but not quite. She abolished the Capitalist marriage laws, and replaced them by the system of eugenic unions under the control of the Connubial Board.

FOURTH PUPIL. What is a eugenic union, please sir ?

TEACHER. You will learn about that in the Ninth Standard.

F.B.O. (*He steps forward to open the gate in the railing.*) Look out, mister ; ere comes the Fabians.

TEACHER. Quick !—Right about face !—On your right, kneel !

As the Teacher and pupils go down on one knee, facing the door on the left, it is opened from within, and there enter in procession the MARCHIONESS OF HOLLOWAY, LADY WELLS, LORD BLATCHFORD *and* LORD KEIR-HARDIE.

The MARCHIONESS, *who is a majestic middle-aged person, wears a coronet and robe trimmed with ermine, inaccurately modelled on the coronation robes of a peeress.* LADY WELLS, *who is young and beautiful, is dressed in the costume of a debutante at Court, also inaccurate in details.* LORD BLATCHFORD *wears the hood and gown of a Doctor of Comparative Mythology in the University of Wapping over a Norfolk suit.* LORD KEIR-HARDIE *is in the evening dress of an unscrupulous private gentleman of the Edwardian period, except for his tie, which is a bright red.*

All four carry wreaths of enamelled flowers which they proceed to lay on MR. SHAW. *They take no notice of the kneeling class, nor of the Comrades who open the gate for them. The manner of the* MARCHIONESS *is that of the proud proprietor of a show; that of* LADY WELLS *is tinged with girlish enthusiasm;* LORD BLATCHFORD *smiles cynically; and* LORD KEIR-HARDIE *lays down his wreath with an air of indignation, and turns away scowling.*

MARCHIONESS. (*To the Teacher*) What class is this?

TEACHER. Standard Five of Elementary School Eight of South-east Municipal District A. 14, may it please your Excellency.

MARCHIONESS. Let me see, where is that?

TEACHER. It used to be called Battersea.

MARCHIONESS. Ah yes, I remember. Do they know that it was once a home of slavery, from which their ancestors were delivered by the immortal poet, John Burns?

TEACHER. I was just teaching them something about the Revolution when your Excellencies came in.

MARCHIONESS. (*Graciously*) Rise! What is your name—number, I mean?

TEACHER. (*Stands up*) T. W. 11341, South-east Municipal District K. 17, your Excellency.

MARCHIONESS. Go on; I should like to hear

you. Do they know who we are? They may stand.

TEACHER. On your feet, stand! (*The class rises facing the Fabians.*) Do you know who their Excellencies are?

VOICES. Fabians.

TEACHER. Members of the Most Noble Order of Hereditary Fabians. What has that Order done for us?—(*To Fourth Pupil*) You.

FOURTH PUPIL. It has put an end to civilization, with all its attendant evils, and substituted the glorious era of freedom, equality and universal comradeship.

MARCHIONESS. Very good. And do you know who I am? (*The Fourth Pupil is silent.*) Do you?

SECOND PUPIL. Please, mum, you are er progeny. (*Points to Venus.*)

TEACHER. I have just been telling them about your Excellency's great ancestress.—(*To Pupils*) Her Excellency is the Marchioness of Holloway, Lady Superior of the Order.

MARCHIONESS. Surely they ought to know that without being told. I gave instructions to have my portrait hung up in every school in the country. Didn't you recognize me?

VOICES. Yes—No.

MARCHIONESS. (*To Second Pupil, who has said No*) Why not?

SECOND PUPIL. Please mum, because you look so old.

MARCHIONESS. How dare you—(*To Teacher*) —you, I mean! This child is mentally deficient.

You have no business to have her in your class. See that she is reported to the Medical Board.

TEACHER. Yes, your Excellency. I only discovered it this morning. She is really a boy.

MARCHIONESS. That makes it worse. He had better be sent to a home for the incurably insane. I shall have this inquired into. What is his number?

TEACHER. (*Examining collar*) V.L.L. 23, your Excellency.

MARCHIONESS. (*Takes out tablets and makes a note*) Very good. Go on. Let me see if the others are in their right minds.

TEACHER. This is Lord Blatchford. (*Points him out with the wand.*)

BLATCHFORD. You needn't ask them anything about me. Stick to my illustrious ancestor.

TEACHER. Your Excellency will excuse their mistakes. Who was this? (*Points to John Bull.*)

VOICES. Keirrardie—Blatchford—Wells.

TEACHER. Robert Blatchford, the great editor who first discovered the literary genius of Bernard Shaw, and published his immortal writings. What was the name of his paper?

VOICES. *The Daily Mail.*

TEACHER. Right. In that glass case (*Points to it*) is preserved a burnt file of the *Daily Mail* for the last year of the Capitalist regime. To its charred pages we are indebted for nearly all we know of the extinct civilization of the Twentieth Century.—And this? (*Points to Hamlet.*)

FIRST PUPIL. H. G. Wells.

TEACHER. Good. In him we recognize Bernard Shaw's favourite pupil, the inspired seer

who mapped out the future of Humanity. What is the name of his most celebrated work ?

THIRD PUPIL. Robinson Crusoe.

FOURTH PUPIL. Uncle Tom's Cabin.

TEACHER. Yes. For writing that work he was cast into the Clock Tower of London by order of the County Council.

LADY WELLS. You may tell them that I am his lineal representative. Do they know that the skull over which he is meditating is a symbol of the Superman ?

TEACHER. I was coming to that. (*To pupils*) You hear Lady Wells ?—And the last ?

VOICES. Keirrardie.

TEACHER. Come, you are all right this time. The ancestor of Lord Keir-Hardie. (*Points him out.*) Do you know why he is dressed like that ?

FOURTH PUPIL. Because he was the Chief Scout.

TEACHER. Good.

BLATCHFORD. That is one theory. But there is some reason to believe that this was the uniform formerly worn by the soldiers employed by the capitalists to massacre the wage slaves. They were known as the Black Legs, or Black Watch, in consequence. It is thought by some scholars that Keir-Hardie was originally a Black Leg, who was converted to the cause of Humanity by the writings of Bernard Shaw ; and that he thereupon resigned his commission and sank to be a Member of Parliament.

MARCHIONESS. You will only confuse their minds. Some of them are idiotic enough already. (*To Teacher.*) That will do. Take them away.

TEACHER. Yes, your Excellency.—Now, children, three cheers for the noble Order to which you owe your freedom and happiness.

The class cheers faintly, and is marched out by the Teacher, in the way it came in. The Fabians come down from the dais.

KEIR-HARDIE. And this mummery goes on in the name of Socialism!

MARCHIONESS. You forget that there are Comrades present. (*Turns to them.*) That'll do. What are you staring there for? Be off to your work.

The Comrades go out hastily through the inner door.

BLATCHFORD. It always has gone on, and I suppose it always will.

LADY WELLS. For shame! You are worse than Lord Keir-Hardie. He does believe in the principle, but you believe in nothing.

BLATCHFORD. You don't expect a student of Comparative Mythology to believe in a set of curios like that, I hope. (*Waves his hand towards the dais.*)

MARCHIONESS. Please to remember that one of them represents my ancestress.

BLATCHFORD. I beg your pardon, Marchioness. I don't dispute that you had an ancestress, and that she played a part in the revolution. But you can't object to my saying that I doubt if that is her statue.

MARCHIONESS. I would rather not hear your doubts. If you cannot see the likeness, others can.

BLATCHFORD. Well, at any rate, I hope I am not like my supposed ancestor. You will let me doubt about him.

MARCHIONESS. I decline to stay here and listen to you. (*She curtsies to* MR. SHAW, *and goes out with an air of dignified superiority, by the inner door. The others move down towards the footlights.*)

LADY WELLS. (*In a low voice of warning*) There ! If you are not careful she may report you to the Medical Board.

BLATCHFORD. (*Alarmed*) I hope you don't mean that !

KEIR-HARDIE. (*Scornfully*) And this is the era of liberty ! This is the result of tyrannizing over the miserable Comrades ; we no longer dare to speak freely even among ourselves. Your Medical Board is simply an anonymous despotism whose spies are our real masters. In the name of progress we have exchanged the priest for the physician ; and he has become a thousand times more dangerous.

LADY WELLS. It is very wrong to talk like that.

KEIR-HARDIE. Why ? Don't we carry our lives at the mercy of the Municipal Physician ? Aren't we liable to be arrested at any moment—I beg your pardon, I ought to have said invalided —on suspicion of the most trifling complaint ? What is the difference between the Socialist hospitals and the Capitalist prisons, except that we can be sent to them without the form of trial by any unscrupulous physician ?

LADY WELLS. For shame ! The physicians are

wise and noble men. I don't believe that they are capable of doing anything wrong.

KEIR-HARDIE. Of course not! It is the blind faith of you women that gives them their power, and enables them to put every honest man out of the way by means of some trumped-up charge. Do you know that even I, though my pulse is firm, and my eye is clear, and only last week I carried off the middle-weight Tango belt—I heard only yesterday that I was suspected of the mumps! And you ask me to grovel to the fiend who is responsible for it all. (*He waves a hand towards* MR. SHAW, *who starts in his sleep, visibly to the audience, but unperceived by the Fabians, who are looking another way.*)

BLATCHFORD. My dear fellow, if you don't know on which side your own bread is buttered, you will run the risk of being treated as mentally deficient. Humanity wants idols to worship, and these are as good as any others.

KEIR-HARDIE. I am not thinking of them, but of ourselves. They may have been sincere enough, but what is the net result of their work? Instead of reckoning in pounds, shillings and pence, we pretend to reckon in hours of labour; instead of you and me being called peers we are called Fabians; and instead of the people being called slaves they are called comrades. When I think of the great Keir-Hardie giving his life to overthrow the hereditary principle, I am ashamed to think that I am drawing a million a year just because I am supposed to be related to him.

LADY WELLS. You can always give your million away.

KEIR-HARDIE. And what would that be? Charity!—the very thing that we boast of having abolished. It is not money the poor creatures want, but liberty to call their souls their own. I cannot bear the sight of them.

LADY WELLS. I think you take a morbid view. (KEIR-HARDIE *starts in alarm.*) No, no, I don't mean morbid in a medical sense. I meant that you had nothing to reproach yourself with.

KEIR-HARDIE. You see for yourself what a reign of terror we are living under. I am expecting every day to hear that Lady Wells has been invalided.

LADY WELLS. How dare you! What charge can the Medical Board bring against me?

KEIR-HARDIE. Sorcery.

BLATCHFORD. Ridiculous! You ought to be ashamed of believing in such nonsense.

KEIR-HARDIE. It is not a question of my belief, but hers. (*To* LADY WELLS.) Please don't think that I am going to play the traitor: I am warning you for your own sake. It is believed that you secretly practise the art of telepathy. I have heard it whispered that you have in your possession a treatise on palmistry. And you are suspected of seeking for forbidden knowledge in order to break the spell that binds the tyrant in his unhallowed sleep.

LADY WELLS. Ah, if only the Master could be awakened, all the trouble would be at an end.

KEIR-HARDIE. I tell you it would be ten times

worse. It is the abject superstition that centres around him that stands in the way of every reform. The next revolution will have to begin by blowing up that impostor. (MR. SHAW *starts more violently than before.*)

LADY WELLS. I wish he would awaken, if it were only for twenty-four hours, to give you the lie.

KEIR-HARDIE. Hush! (*He looks round nervously at* MR. SHAW.) If you go on wishing like that he may wake. How do I know that you are not emitting telepathic waves at this moment?

BLATCHFORD. Don't be an ass. You pretend to warn Lady Wells about her harmless fancies, but you forget the danger you are in yourself. I hear that you have founded an Anti-Shavian League. (KEIR-HARDIE *hangs his head.*)

LADY WELLS. Has he? (*To* KEIR-HARDIE.) If I thought that you really were going to blow up the Master I would report you to the Municipal Physician!

KEIR-HARDIE. Enough! And this is the woman to whom I was once married for a whole month!

KEIR-HARDIE *goes out by the outer door, which he slams behind him.*

BLATCHFORD. You need not be so distressed. You are concerning yourself about a mythical personage.

LADY WELLS. Whom do you mean?

BLATCHFORD. (*Points to* MR. SHAW.) This thing. I can prove to you that no such being as Bernard Shaw ever existed.

LADY WELLS. But how ?—Why ?—I don't understand you. He was the founder of our own Order.

BLATCHFORD. Not at all. The Fabian Order was founded by Fabius. I have found out all about him in a Chinese history of Europe, written in the twenty-first century. He was a military commander in the African war, and earned the nickname of Cunctator on account of his slow movements, through which he failed to catch the enemy.

LADY WELLS. I don't believe it. But even if it were true, it would make no difference. You cannot deny the existence of Bernard Shaw, the author of the plays.

BLATCHFORD. That is exactly how the myth arose. I have gone through the surviving fragments of the plays carefully with a microscope, and I am satisfied that they were written by a philosopher who was also a lawyer. There was only one such man alive at that period, the Lord Chancellor Haldane. Bernard Shaw is simply his nom-de-plume.

LADY WELLS. But this is dreadful! Why should Lord Haldane have concealed his authorship ?

BLATCHFORD. Because the English of that day looked on wit and humour as signs of folly. To succeed in life everyone had to pretend to be dull.

LADY WELLS. All this is sheer extravagance. How do you account for that ? (*Points to the group of St. George and the Dragon.*)

BLATCHFORD. Ah, that is the key to the whole

confusion. Do you know whom that really represents ?

LADY WELLS. Of course I do: Saint George Bernard Shaw.

BLATCHFORD. No, it represents an old English king, George the Third. I have just discovered this medal on the site of the old Mint. (*Shows her a five-shilling piece.*) It was evidently struck to commemorate the battle of Waterloo. The Dragon represents the famous Napoleon Bonaparte, whom the king slew with his own hand.

LADY WELLS. Impossible ! I can't bear it ! But stop—what are you talking about ? There is Bernard Shaw himself, asleep but still alive. What do you call *him* ?

BLATCHFORD. A waxwork, I am afraid.

LADY WELLS. Oh, don't ! You are breaking my heart. Why I can see him breathe.

BLATCHFORD. By machinery. A very simple contrivance would do all that.

LADY WELLS. I hardly know whether I am awake myself. Do you really mean that that is only a dummy ? Who made it ?

BLATCHFORD. Probably it was made by the Fabian Order at some time in the past, in order to secure their own power. It is our position as guardians of the sleeping hero that gives us our hold over the Comrades.

LADY WELLS. But it could not go on like that for ever. Who winds it up ?

BLATCHFORD. The Marchioness, I suspect. You know how angry she always gets if any doubt is thrown on the legend. I believe the secret is

handed down from one Lady Superior to another. You may have to wind it up some day.

LADY WELLS. How I wish you had never told me! You have destroyed my romance, and made my life a dull, grey thing.

BLATCHFORD. You forced me to speak when you rejected me on account of that absurd dummy. You told me you had consecrated your maiden heart to him.

LADY WELLS. And I say so still. In my whole life I have only married twelve men, and now I shall never love again.

BLATCHFORD. You refuse me for a myth?

LADY WELLS. I do.

BLATCHFORD. You won't be mine for one week?

LADY WELLS. Not for one day.

BLATCHFORD. Then I shall apply for you to the Connubial Board.

LADY WELLS. Coward! Ah, if only he could hear! (*She moves towards the dais.*)

BLATCHFORD. (*Following*) You are like a little girl with a doll.

LADY WELLS. My hero lies there. You have broken my heart, but you cannot shatter my ideal (*Approaches the couch.*)

BLATCHFORD. What are you doing? You mustn't touch the figure.

LADY WELLS. I am bidding my dream farewell. (*Kisses* MR. SHAW.)

He opens his eyes. She recoils with a cry.

MR. SHAW.—the wholesome and natural use of a pure vegetarian diet, instead of continuing to indulge in the barbarous and pernicious practice of devouring the bleeding carcases of cows and sheep. (*As he speaks he rises into a sitting posture and looks round.*)

The Clock strikes Twelve.

BLATCHFORD. (*As* LADY WELLS *staggers back into his arms*) She has done the trick!

MR. SHAW. Am I awake or asleep?

LADY WELLS. Awake at last, after two hundred years.

BLATCHFORD. What an opportunity for science!

MR. SHAW. Please tell me which of us is out of his mind.

BLATCHFORD. Neither, though it is as difficult for us to realize it, as for you. It seems to be the fact that you have been asleep ever since the Revolution.

MR. SHAW. What revolution? And what is this nonsense about two hundred years?

BLATCHFORD. I will explain. (*To* LADY WELLS) But go and send for a cinematophonograph. This is too precious to be lost.

LADY WELLS. No, let me tell him. You go, and fetch the Superior. She ought to know at once.

BLATCHFORD. I cannot leave my post. You don't grasp the importance of recording his first impressions.

LADY WELLS. I won't leave you alone with my dear Master after your wicked lies.

BLATCHFORD. They were scientific conclusions reached by the usual methods of Comparative Mythology.

MR. SHAW. What are you both talking about ?

LADY WELLS. He said that you were a mythological personage.

MR. SHAW. Just at present I feel inclined to agree with him. Whom do you take me for ?

LADY WELLS. (*With enthusiasm*) Saint George, the slayer of the Dragon !

MR. SHAW. (*Alarmed*) I was afraid it was something of that sort. (*Soothingly*) Yes, I daresay you are right, but hadn't one of you better call an attendant. I should like to see the superintendent as soon as possible.

LADY WELLS. You shall. (*To* LORD BLATCHFORD) Why don't you go and fetch her ?

BLATCHFORD. Don't you see what you have done already ? You have made the Master think he is in a lunatic asylum.

MR. SHAW. (*Nervously*) Not at all ; No such thought crossed my mind, I assure you.

BLATCHFORD. I am Professor of Comparative Mythology in the University of Wapping.

MR. SHAW. (*Soothingly*) I am sure of it. If you had said Oxford, I should have believed you.

LADY WELLS. Where is Oxford ?

BLATCHFORD. Hush ! There may have been such a place in his time.

MR. SHAW. Excuse me, sir, but do you both think I have been asleep for two hundred years ?

LADY WELLS. I do, but he doesn't. He said you were a waxwork.

MR. SHAW. (*Starts—to* BLATCHFORD) Then I think I would rather *you* went to call the—the authorities of this institution, whatever its nature may be. I am sure I shall be quite safe with this young lady.

LADY WELLS. Dear Master, I would die for you!

MR. SHAW. (*Hurriedly*) At least, no, on second thoughts perhaps you had better both go.

BLATCHFORD. Perhaps one of the Comrades is about. (*Goes to the inner door, opens it, and calls.*) Comrade!

Enter F.B.O. 109.

MR. SHAW. What, is this a prison?

BLATCHFORD. Go and ask the Lady Superior to come at once; and telephone for a cinematophonograph. The Master has awakened.

F.B.O. Yes, your Excellency. (*Goes out.*)

LADY WELLS. Don't you really believe us? This is the Shaw Memorial Hall, built on purpose to shelter you during your long hypnotic slumber.

MR. SHAW. This comes of reading *Looking Backward*. But how did I get here?

BLATCHFORD. Here is the Lady Superior. (*Enter the* MARCHIONESS OF HOLLOWAY.)

MARCHIONESS. (*In the doorway*) Has some one gone out of his mind?

MR. SHAW. I am afraid I have.

MARCHIONESS. The Master! (*Rushes towards him, and kneels.*)

BLATCHFORD. Now, sir, perhaps I may be able

to explain. You fell asleep in the act of delivering a speech in favour of vegetarianism——

MR. SHAW. I remember!

BLATCHFORD. It is believed you were secretly hypnotized. The Socialist revolution followed, the Capitalist regime was overthrown by your followers, and you have lain here ever since, watched over by their descendants.

MR. SHAW. It really begins to sound almost true.

MARCHIONESS. (*Rising*) I can hardly believe my own ears yet. Speak to me.

MR. SHAW. (*Puts his hand to his head.*) I am trying to think. How long did you say I had been asleep?

MARCHIONESS. Just two hundred years.

MR. SHAW. Two hundred years! And I am in another world?

LADY WELLS. A world made brighter and better by the triumph of your teaching.

MARCHIONESS. It looks as if the spell had run out.

LADY WELLS. No, it wasn't that. (*Proudly*) I wakened him.

MR. SHAW. Would to God you had let me sleep on! (*Bows his face in his hands.*)

The outer door opens, and three Comrades enter bringing in a machine roughly resembling a mechanical piano, with phonograph receiver attached. The MARCHIONESS *enjoins quiet by a gesture. They fix the machine near the door, under which*

they lay wires. While this is being done, the Fabians draw together on the other side of the stage, and speak in low voices.

BLATCHFORD. We must be extremely careful with him at first. It is like a blind man receiving his sight for the first time.

MARCHIONESS. How did you wake him? (LADY WELLS *hangs her head.*)

BLATCHFORD. In the same way as the Sleeping Beauty in the Wood.

MARCHIONESS. (*With indignation*) Lady Wells!

LADY WELLS. But Lord Blatchford had just proved to me that the Master was a waxwork. I suppose it was an instinctive test.

MARCHIONESS. I think, as head of the Fabian Order, the test ought to have been applied by me.

The Comrades go out, closing the door.

BLATCHFORD. Now we shan't lose a word or a gesture. (*Points to the machine.*)

MR. SHAW. (*Raises his head*) This is more awful than death. (*The Fabians go towards him.*)

MARCHIONESS. I understand your feelings, dear Master, but we will try to console you for the friends you have lost.

MR. SHAW. (*He tries to stand up, but sinks down again.*) I feel very weak.

MARCHIONESS. Let me support you. (*She gives him her arm.*) Bring the Master's couch this way. (*She leads* MR. SHAW *towards the footlights, the others following with the couch, which they place in front of the machine.* MR. SHAW *seats himself. The* MARCHIONESS *sits beside him.* LADY WELLS

places herself on a cushion at his feet. LORD BLATCHFORD *remains standing.*)

LADY WELLS. You have awakened in a world full of your reverent disciples, to whom your lightest wish will be a law.

MR. SHAW. Thank you. Please let me have a glass of milk. (*The Fabians exchange glances of surprise and consternation.*)

MARCHIONESS. You have not yet realized how completely your principles have triumphed. Cows have been abolished for more than one hundred years.

LADY WELLS. Oh, but wait! I think there is one in the Zoological Gardens.

BLATCHFORD. What is the use of that, when the art by which our ancestors extracted the lacteal fluid has been lost?

MARCHIONESS. Do you think, dear Master, if we sent for the cow, that you could milk it?

MR. SHAW. I can't wait. You must give me some brandy.

MARCHIONESS. (*Bewildered*) What is that?

BLATCHFORD. I think it was one of the deadly decoctions with which the Capitalists were in the habit of drugging their serfs.

LADY WELLS. What nonsense! Why the Master spent his life in denouncing those drugs. He founded the Royal Automobile Club on purpose to put them down.

MR. SHAW. There seem to be some slight errors in my biography. If I can't have anything else, please give me a glass of water?

MARCHIONESS. (*Consults the clock*) You shall

have one in an hour and a half, as soon as the municipal supply is turned on.

Mr. Shaw. Good Heavens, do you mean to tell me I can't have a drink of water ?

Blatchford. The habit of water-drinking between meals has been pronounced by modern medical science so dangerous that the supply is only turned on three times a day, and there are severe penalties for secretly bottling it. I daresay these regulations seem a little strange to you at first, after the frightful anarchy under which you suffered.

Mr. Shaw. Ah, yes, of course it was very bad in some ways ; but still——Can I have anything to eat ?

Marchioness. The municipal meals are distributed at the same time as the water. I must send in a requisition to the Culinary Department for an additional portion.

Lady Wells. The Master shall have mine till it is granted.

Mr. Shaw. It is very good of you ; but isn't there a municipal chemist you could send to, meanwhile. I am really not feeling well.

The Fabians. Hush—sh ! (*They glance with alarm at the machine.*)

Marchioness. The Master is not yet fully awake. I am delighted to see that his long trance has not had the slightest ill effect.

Lady Wells. You are looking the picture of health.

Blatchford. The Master only meant that he was still a little sleepy. He will be delighted to

know that ill-health no longer exists in our happy country, thanks to the wisdom and benevolence of our enlightened Medical Board. (*To* Mr. Shaw.) If it is even fancied that any one is not in robust health, and the vigilant agents of the Board find it out, an ambulance is instantly sent for him, and he passes under the Board's protecting care, frequently for the rest of his life.

Mr. Shaw. It strikes me that your Medical Board is rather like the old Inquisition.

Blatchford. I have never heard of that; but no doubt even the hideous Capitalist ages had some benevolent institutions.

Lady Wells. The Master ought to be told that if Black Maria——

Mr. Shaw. Do you mean the prison van?

Marchioness. No, no! My dear Master, surely you understand that all those horrors have been swept away. There are no prisons in the Social Commonwealth. Black Maria is a name of endearment given to the ambulances of the Medical Board.

Lady Wells. I was only going to warn you —I mean of course to encourage you with the knowledge—that if Black Maria once came for you, you would be taken the greatest possible care of, though we should not be likely to see you again.

Mr. Shaw. It seems to me that I had better keep well.

Marchioness. Much better. Perhaps it will be wiser for us to talk in Esperanto. Ni ĉiam parolas Esperante kiam ni ne volas, ke niaj

kamaradoj komprenu, ĉar antaŭ ol lerni ĝin, ili devas trairi la naŭan klason.[1]

MR. SHAW. What on earth does that mean ?

LADY WELLS. The Master has forgotten his Esperanto !

MR. SHAW. I never knew any.

BLATCHFORD. We don't want to contradict you, of course ; only to refresh your memory. It is natural that you should not remember everything at first.

MR. SHAW. But, my good man, I assure you I never learnt the language.

LADY WELLS. Master ! You invented it !

MR. SHAW. It strikes me that I am not the only inventor. Don't you think my biography may have got mixed up with some one else's ?

BLATCHFORD. Just what I have always held. The popular belief is that you were a playwright.

LADY WELLS. And so you were, weren't you ?

MR. SHAW. What do they believe I wrote ?

LADY WELLS. *Man and Superman*, *The School for Scandal*, and *Charley's Aunt*.

MR. SHAW. I am thankful they don't credit me with *Hamlet*.

MARCHIONESS. All the libraries were burned during the revolution, in accordance with your famous advice. But the titles of your principal works have been handed down by tradition.

BLATCHFORD. That burnt file of your organ, the *Daily Mail*, is our only reliable source of

[1] We always use Esperanto when we do not want to be understood by the Comrades. They are not allowed to learn it unless they have passed the Ninth Standard.

information as to your period. And the horrors it reveals are so fearful that no one is allowed to read it unless he has passed the Ninth Standard.

LADY WELLS. Ah, and now the Master will be able to give us the right answer. What did Beryl do ?

MR. SHAW. Do you mean Christabel ?

LADY WELLS. Oh, don't say that you have forgotten Beryl Robinson ! The most famous heroine of the Twentieth Century, the typewriter girl who was kidnapped and carried off in a motor by a wicked millionaire, and offered the choice between losing her situation or diamonds and shame ! The report of the crime runs through half the file, and breaks off on the last page that has not been burnt, with the words—"To be continued."

MR. SHAW. It is the serial !

MARCHIONESS. It is generally agreed by historians that this celebrated outrage was the last straw that drove the masses to revolt. But there has always been a controversy as to the choice made by the heroine.

LADY WELLS. Now you *must* remember. *What* did Beryl do ?

MR. SHAW. Strange as it may seem to you, I never heard of Beryl to this moment, and yet I can answer your question with perfect confidence. She threw up her situation, and was rewarded by marrying a baronet.

LADY WELLS. Oh, I am so glad !

MARCHIONESS. A highly satisfactory solution.

MR. SHAW. Was I the editor of the *Daily Mail?*

BLATCHFORD. Of course not. I am descended from the editor of the *Daily Mail*. My name is Blatchford.

LADY WELLS. And mine is Wells.

MARCHIONESS. I am the Marchioness of Holloway. My ancestress is there. (*She points to the Venus.*)

MR. SHAW. (*He looks round at the statuary.*) Hullo! Thank God, it is a nightmare after all.

LADY WELLS. Master!

MR. SHAW. I apologize, if it isn't. But I still feel some doubt whether I am awake or asleep. What is that extraordinary collection meant for?

BLATCHFORD. I always had my doubts of the Venus.

MARCHIONESS. Don't you recognize the greatest of your contemporaries? You must have sat beside that noble woman on a hundred platforms. Look again.

MR. SHAW. Well, you may be right, but I feel confident that I never saw her quite so *décolletée* as that.

BLATCHFORD. You must give the Master time. I warned you that his memory would only come back by degrees.

MARCHIONESS. It will be a great disappointment if he has forgotten everything. I hoped you would have been able to tell us about the horrors of the Twentieth Century.

MR. SHAW. Ah well, we had some good times.

MARCHIONESS. The crimes committed in the public streets, the strife between Capital and

Labour, the international wars and bloodshed,—
(*A distant gunshot is heard to the right.*)

MR. SHAW. (*Startled*) What is that ?

MARCHIONESS. (*Carelessly*) Only the Comrades. I fancy there is some little difference between the tailors and sempstresses.

MR. SHAW. Do you mean to say that they are fighting in the streets ?

MARCHIONESS. Of course not. You must be thinking of the bad old days. This is the age of universal peace. (*Another shot, nearer.*)

MR. SHAW. Then what is that firing.

MARCHIONESS. I expect it is the tailors' pickets operating against the sempstresses.

MR. SHAW. Do you mean shooting them ?

MARCHIONESS. They are entitled to do that—when there is a trade dispute.

BLATCHFORD. It is a question of the hours of labour. By law there is a four hours day for everybody, but as some kinds of work are lighter than others, the sempstresses' hour only counts as a quarter.

MR. SHAW. Then they actually work sixteen hours a day ?

BLATCHFORD. That is what it comes to, naturally.

MR. SHAW. And the tailors ?

BLATCHFORD. Their work is more responsible. They have to sign requisitions for cloth from the municipal stores, and give receipts for the finished garments. The sempstresses merely do the actual making of the clothes.

MR. SHAW. And how long do the tailors work ?

BLATCHFORD. I have just told you. Four hours.

MR. SHAW. And have these women no redress ?

BLATCHFORD. Certainly. (*A sharp fusillade.*) Don't you hear them ?

MR. SHAW. The women are defending themselves from the men with firearms !

MARCHIONESS. No, no. The women are asserting their right to work, and the men are resisting them.

MR. SHAW. And have you no laws to stop this kind of thing ? No police ?

LADY WELLS. Police! Master, you cannot know what you are saying. The police were abolished in the first year of freedom and brotherhood.

MARCHIONESS. Let me explain. The women have a standing majority in Parliament, and of course the law is in their favour. But the trades unions are exempt from the law. I thought that was due to your teaching.

MR. SHAW. I am trying to remember what I did teach.

MARCHIONESS. Parliament passed an Act last week to raise the tailors' hours to sixteen and reduce the sempstresses' to four. Thereupon the tailors went on strike, and picketed the municipal clothing stores ; and I expect the sempstresses have been trying to rush the pickets.

Firing is heard just outside, followed by a scream. The outer door is burst open, and a female Comrade of sixteen, bleeding in the face, staggers through, and falls inside the threshold.

MR. SHAW, (*Springing to his feet*) And these horrors take place in my name !

LADY WELLS. No, she has come here because your Hall is a sanctuary.

MR. SHAW. Thank God for that !—Why don't you help her ? (*He is going towards the girl, when the Fabians hold him back.*)

BLATCHFORD. Be careful !

MARCHIONESS. The law forbids anyone without a First Aid Certificate to touch a wounded person. There is sure to be an ambulance in waiting.

LADY WELLS. Here it is.

Three Nurses in a white uniform, with the Geneva Cross in red on the front and back, two of them carrying a stretcher, come in and carry off the wounded girl, closing the door behind them.

MR. SHAW. Does this sort of thing happen often ?

MARCHIONESS. There is generally some trade dispute going on. But I don't think this one is likely to be serious. (*Some dropping shots in the distance.*) I expect the men have succeeded by this time.

MR. SHAW. But is there no attempt to settle these murderous frays by arbitration ?

LADY WELLS. Please don't speak like that. It will be resented.

MARCHIONESS. We must make allowance for the fact that the Master was accustomed to speak strongly about the evils of the Capitalist regime.

In our happier age such language is not permitted, I am glad to say. Everyone is contented.

BLATCHFORD. Arbitration has been found useless in trade disputes, now that wages have been abolished. It is a question of whose work is hardest, and of course that can only be tested by active resistance. If I am willing to work rather than resist, that shows that I am contented with my lot.

MR. SHAW. And if you refuse to do any work at all ?

BLATCHFORD. That proves me to be an invalid, and I come under the Medical Board.

MR. SHAW. I begin to respect the Medical Board.

MARCHIONESS. I was sure the Master would approve of our institutions as soon as they were properly explained to him.

MR. SHAW. But how is it that every one doesn't choose the work that really is lightest ?

MARCHIONESS. Choose ? But of course there was a certain choice in the dreadful days of Individualism and competition.

BLATCHFORD. Nowadays every man is given the work for which he is deemed fittest by the Labour Department. The higher appointments are still awarded as in your time, by open competition.

A knock at the outer door. A Guardian of the Peace comes in wearing the dress of a Twentieth Century policeman, except that his feet are in sandals.

GUARDIAN. May it please you Excellencies,

Her Highness the Permanent Prime Ministress sends her congratulations to the Master, and will call on him immediately. (*Goes out.*)

Mr. Shaw. Who is that ? I thought you said the police were abolished.

Marchioness. That is only one of the Guardians of the Peace. They are necessary to clear the streets for us when there is a dispute among the Comrades.

Mr. Shaw. Then you are not Comrades ?

Marchioness. Sir !

Lady Wells. We are Fabians—the only survivors of the Order.

Blatchford. We are the hereditary Friends of the People, who have replaced the luxurious aristocracy of the past.

Mr. Shaw. You seem to fill their place very well. And who is Her Highness ?

Marchioness. Her official designation is Permanent Private Secretary to the Prime Minister. Under the new regime the Prime Minister is changed every day, to avoid jealousy, so that the power has naturally fallen into the hands of her permanent adviser, who obtains the post by open competition.

Lady Wells. The present Prime Ministress is the most distinguished woman who has ever held the office. In her examination she obtained 992,000 marks out of a possible million.

Mr. Shaw. I should have thought her brain would have given way.

Lady Wells. Well, she has not been strong enough to do any work since. Her duties are

discharged meanwhile by her Permanent Lady's Maid.

MR. SHAW. And how many marks did *she* get ?

MARCHIONESS. She is only a Comrade. The Labour Department nominated her.

BLATCHFORD. We ought to be frank with the Master. The appointment was a job. She was the wife of the Permanent Hall Porter.

A knock. The Guardian of the Peace opens the outer door, admitting the PRIME MINISTRESS *and* PERMANENT LADY'S MAID. *The* PRIME MINISTRESS *is dressed in a black riding habit and tall hat, and wears spectacles. The* LADY'S MAID *is in the ordinary dress of a Comrade. The Guardian of the Peace closes the door again, remaining outside.*

The Fabians rise, and exchange ceremonious bows with the PRIME MINISTRESS.

MARCHIONESS. (*To* MR. SHAW) This is her Highness. (*To* BLATCHFORD) Will you send for a chair. (LORD BLATCHFORD *goes through the inner door.*)

LADY'S MAID. (*She addresses the Prime Ministress in the tone of a nurse to a child.*) Shake hands with the gentleman.

PRIME MINISTRESS. (*Doing so*) I am very pleased to meet you, sir.

MR. SHAW. (*Rising for a moment*) I am afraid I am a little late. (*He offers his hand to the* LADY'S MAID, *who kneels and kisses it respectfully. He*

snatches it away.) What are you doing, woman ? Get up.

LADY'S MAID. (*Annoyed*) I hope I know my place, sir. (*Rises.* LORD BLATCHFORD *returns with a chair which the* LADY'S MAID *takes from him, and sets facing* MR. SHAW. *She leads her mistress to it, and seats her, the* LADY'S MAID *standing respectfully on one side. The others resume their former attitudes.*)

PRIME MINISTRESS. It is a fine day.

MR. SHAW. I suppose that is by order of the Weather Department.

LADY'S MAID. Her Highness has notified the Viceroy of your awakening, sir.

MR. SHAW. Another official ! What viceroy ?

LADY'S MAID. (*Surprised*) The Viceroy of England.

MARCHIONESS. The Master has not yet learnt all the changes that have taken place since his time. (*To* MR. SHAW) Surely you were an advocate of universal suffrage ?

MR. SHAW. Of course.

MARCHIONESS. And of Imperial Federation ?

MR. SHAW. I was in favour of the Federation of Mankind.

MARCHIONESS. We have not quite got to that, though we hope it is coming. At present we merely pay a tribute to Germany. In the meanwhile the British Empire has been federated on democratic lines. Of course the Imperial Parliament meets at Delhi.

MR. SHAW. I don't remember advocating that.

MARCHIONESS. But surely you must have foreseen it ?

BLATCHFORD. Perhaps the population of India was smaller than that of England in your time. To-day it is over three hundred millions.

MR. SHAW. What about the Colonies ?

BLATCHFORD. England is ten millions at present. It varies with the eugenic policy of the Government. Ireland is fifteen millions, thanks to her reactionary marriage laws.

MR. SHAW. But Canada, South Africa, Australia—what of them ?

BLATCHFORD. Canada is no longer in the Empire. She rebelled against the Socialist regime, and has since annexed the United States.

MARCHIONESS. The population of Australia is unknown, as the Aboriginal Government objects to a census. It is estimated at half a million.

MR. SHAW. And South Africa ? I suppose the Boers have got that ?

MARCHIONESS. Boers ?

LADY WELLS. Who were the Boers ?

BLATCHFORD. Perhaps they were a tribe that has since changed its name. The leading tribes now are the Zulus and Matabele.

MR. SHAW. But what has become of the Whites ? (*The Fabians exchange confused glances.*) Does nobody know ?

LADY'S MAID. It is against the law to refer to it, sir.

MR. SHAW. Why ?

MARCHIONESS. Lest it should tend to discredit your teaching in the minds of the ignorant and

prejudiced. As soon as the Blacks received the franchise and found themselves in a great majority, they restored cannibalism.

MR. SHAW. Oh !

MARCHIONESS. It is a sad chapter in the history of human brotherhood, of which no Socialist likes to be reminded.

MR. SHAW. I can understand that.

LADY WELLS. So you see the Viceroy represents the Imperial Government of India.

MR. SHAW. And is the Viceroy a native ?

LADY'S MAID. No, sir. His Vice-Majesty is a Hindu—Maharajah Sri Singh Mahindar Adhiraj Ranjisinghji Badadur.

MR. SHAW. (*Starts up and sinks back again.*) And do you mean that the people of England submit to be ruled by him ? (*The others exchange looks of alarm.*)

MARCHIONESS. We are disappointed to hear such language from you, my dear Master. It sounds as if you had not quite shaken off the very prejudices from which you did so much to deliver us.

BLATCHFORD. His Vice-Majesty is a wise and merciful ruler, for whose care of us we are grateful. Besides, he very seldom interferes with the native government. Our true ruler sits there. (*Indicates the* PRIME MINISTRESS.)

LADY'S MAID. Say thank you to the gentleman.

PRIME MINISTRESS. Thank you, sir. (*To Lady's Maid*) Shall I ask him to marry me now ?

LADY'S MAID. Yes, I think you may.

PRIME MINISTRESS. (*To* BLATCHFORD) If you please, will you marry me ?

LADY'S MAID. No, no, that's the wrong one. That is the gentleman you want to marry. (*Indicates* MR. SHAW.)

MARCHIONESS. I ought to have been informed of this.

PRIME MINISTRESS. But I think I like this one best.

LADY'S MAID. (*To the* MARCHIONESS) It is a State measure. (*To the* PRIME MINISTRESS) You shall marry him afterwards. You must ask the Master first.

PRIME MINISTRESS. But he is so old !

MR. SHAW. It is quite unnecessary to press this unfortunate young woman. I——

MARCHIONESS. Stay ! Before you come to any decision, I ask to be heard. As the descendant of Venus, and Lady Superior of the Fabian Order, I have the first claim to your hand.

LADY WELLS. (*Rising*) And what about me ? ——I woke the Master with my kiss !

MR. SHAW. Yes, I certainly think that confers a very strong claim.

MARCHIONESS. It was a stolen kiss. You usurped my prerogative.

LADY WELLS. (*To* MR. SHAW) I vowed my maiden heart to you when you lay there enchanted.

MARCHIONESS. And I watched over you for years before this girl was born, with the devotion of a daughter.

MR. SHAW. That is an excellent idea. I will still be a father to you.

MARCHIONESS. I refuse.

LADY WELLS. (*Kneels*) If you reject me I shall appeal to the Connubial Board.

MARCHIONESS. (*Kneels*) I have more influence with the Connubial Board than she has.

MR. SHAW. Get up, ladies. We are not in a theatre.

MARCHIONESS. (*Rises*) Practically we are. (*Points to the machine.*) At this moment half the population is seated in the picture palaces watching us, and listening to every word.

MR. SHAW. Good Heavens! (LADY WELLS *rises, posing to the machine.*)

BLATCHFORD. Surely you had picture palaces? They are mentioned in the *Daily Mail.*

MR. SHAW. Yes, but they were not quite so well organized as yours seem to be. We relied for news on the papers.

BLATCHFORD. We have them, too. (*Opens street door.*) Listen!

VOICE OUTSIDE. Speshulextry! The Master Awike arter two underd years! As fergotten everyfink! Fibians tell im the Story of is Laife!

MR. SHAW. For heaven's sake stop that thing at once! (*Indicates the machine. The* MARCHIONESS *and the* PERMANENT LADY'S MAID *whisper together.*)

BLATCHFORD. That is the second time you have used that curious word. What does it mean?

MR. SHAW. Which word?

BLATCHFORD. Heaven.

MR. SHAW. (*Bitterly*) That was what I tried to establish on earth.

MARCHIONESS. The Government objects to

stopping the cinematophonograph. It would provoke a rebellion.

MR. SHAW. Do you prefer to drive me to rebellion ?

LADY WELLS. Oh, hush. (*Lays her hand on his lips.*)

LADY'S MAID. (*Hastily*) Perhaps we had better stop it.

MARCHIONESS. Do. The Master has not quite come to himself.

She looks at LORD BLATCHFORD, *who goes to the inner door and opens it. Comrades F.B.O.* 109 *and C.F.I.* 2240 *are discovered listening.*

BLATCHFORD. What are you doing there ? Take away the register.

The Comrades come in and pass by MR. SHAW.

MR. SHAW. Who are these unfortunate beings ?

MARCHIONESS. They are the Comrades who look after this Hall.

MR. SHAW. (*Scornfully*) Comrades !——Come here. (*To F.B.O.*) What is your name ?

F.B.O. I ain't got none, Master.

MARCHIONESS. You will find his number and municipal district on his collar.

MR. SHAW. (*To F.B.O.*) Take it off.

F.B.O. (*Laughs*) It won't come off, Master.

MARCHIONESS. It is soldered on.

MR. SHAW. (*With cold passion*) And does the whole population go about with iron collars round their necks like galley-slaves ?

Lady Wells. Only the Comrades—those who haven't passed the Ninth Standard.

Mr. Shaw. (*To F.B.O.*) Go and fetch me a file this instant.

Marchioness. My dear Master, you must really give yourself time to become accustomed to the logical results of your own glorious work.

Mr. Shaw. I hope I shall never be accustomed to them. You call me Master—will nobody obey me?

Prime Ministress. (*Rises*) Let me go.

Lady's Maid. Hush! Remember that you are the head of the Government.

Lady Wells. I will go. (*Goes through the inner door.*)

C.F.I. (*To F.B.O.*) The poor gentleman thinks he's back in them bad old days when we was all wage slaves.

Mr. Shaw. Why!——Are you a man or a woman?

C.F.I. A woman, of course. Don't you see my sleeve.

Mr. Shaw. And have you no name, either?

C.F.I. No, Master; except leastways, in our Buildings they does call me the Duchess. And they calls im the Duke.

Blatchford. It is curious that some of these old feudal titles are still remembered among the populace. This man is believed to be descended from—who is it?

F.B.O. The Duke of Wellington.

Blatchford. Yes. It is a myth, no doubt. His ancestor is supposed to have been a famous admiral in the reign of George the Seventh.

MR. SHAW. I agree with you for once ; that is a myth. (*To the Comrades*) I see you are man and wife.

BOTH. (*Eagerly*) No, sir.

MARCHIONESS. (*Shakes her head.*) They are naturally ashamed to confess it. The law does not permit of marriage for more than one year, but I am sorry to say that many of these ignorant creatures go on living together much longer. We sometimes wink at these irregular unions, but of course it doesn't do to mention them openly.

LADY WELLS *returns with a file, which she gives to* MR. SHAW. *He begins to file through C.F.I.'s collar.*

C.F.I. (*Resisting*) What are you doing to my necklace ?

MR. SHAW. (*Drops the file.*) They have forgotten what freedom was !

LORD KEIR-HARDIE *comes in through the outer door, in a state of excitement.*

KEIR-HARDIE. This is the last straw ! So you have awakened now, in order to gloat over the misery you have wrought. Just as your victims were beginning to stir themselves, and dream of restoring the good old days, you have come out of your accursed sleep to rivet the fetters more tightly round their necks.

MR. SHAW. Bravo ! At last I have found a man. Give me your hand.

KEIR-HARDIE. (*Draws back*) I will not take the hand of a tyrant. I will pretend to worship you

no longer. I have called a meeting of the Anti-Shavian League for this very night, and I am going to urge them to revolt. (*Turns towards the door. Everyone rises in dismay.*)

Mr. Shaw. (*Going after him*) Take me with you.

Act Drop.

Interval of ten or fifteen minutes according to the agreement with the refreshment contractor.

ACT II

Stage Directions.

The scene is laid in the head-quarters of the Anti-Shavian League. This is an underground cellar, approached by one of the moving staircases which have long replaced the old-fashioned lifts.

The staircase comes behind tall folding-doors in the centre of the back wall, and consists of two movable bands, working up and down. The bands are provided with slight foot-rests, like the gangways used by passenger steamers. The staircase works up and down past the threshold of the doorway, at so steep an angle that the persons who descend by it are usually precipitated with some violence through the folding doors.

The doors are so constructed as to fly open at a touch, and remain open until closed by hand.

On the back wall, to the right and left of the doorway, hang portraits of Queen Victoria, Napoleon Bonaparte, and other celebrated despots of antiquity.

On the stage, to the right of the audience, is a small table covered by a cloth, on which are placed a book containing the collected fragments of the works attributed to Bernard Shaw by the best authorities, and a horn with a raucous note to be used for enforcing silence.

Behind the table, between it and the right wall, is a Mechanical Chairman. *This is a dummy figure, roughly resembling a Comrade, seated in a chair, and having a gramophone attached. In the top of the head is a slot to receive pennies.*

On the far side of the table is a chair for the secretary, and on the near side another chair available for the person addressing the meeting, when he is compelled by interruption to sit down.

On the opposite side of the stage are rows of benches facing the table. Behind the benches is a shelf supporting a beer barrel and pewter mugs.

The cellar is lit by electricity.

The curtain rises, and the audience are given time to take in these details. Then the folding doors fly open, and F.B.O. 109 *is thrown forward on to the stage, falling on his hands and knees.* Mr. Shaw *and* Lord Keir-Hardie *are seen standing, one behind the other, on the descending band of the staircase, which stops with a jerk, leaving* Mr. Shaw's *feet about eighteen inches above the threshold.* Keir-Hardie *cannons into him from behind, and both just manage to save themselves from falling, by clutching the handrail.*

Mr. Shaw *is disguised in a long flowing cloak suggestive of the state robes of an Alderman of the London County Council, a slouched hat with a broad, drooping brim, and a black mask covering the upper part of the face. His hair and beard are trimmed to their customary length in the Twentieth Century.*

F.B.O. (*Picks himself up and goes towards the*

doorway.) Old on, Master! Let me elp you down. (*The staircase suddenly begins to work again, jerking* Mr. Shaw *and* Keir-Hardie *on to F.B.O.*) Steady! (*They recover their balance.*) There, you're all right now.

Mr. Shaw. (*Unmasks*) Is this the headquarters of the Anti-Shavian League?

Keir-Hardie. (*He addresses* Mr. Shaw *in a tone of unfriendly neutrality, and, as it were, under protest.*) Yes. I advise you to put on your mask again before any of the Comrades come in. Remember, I have warned you that you come here at the risk of your life.

Mr. Shaw. It strikes me that every one does that, on this contrivance. (*Points to the staircase, which is now moving gently.*) It is worse than Earl's Court. I confess I prefer the old-fashioned stairs.

Keir-Hardie. Stairs? I suppose you mean what we call lifts. I believe there are a few still in use in the suburbs.

Mr. Shaw. No, no; I mean a staircase—something like that, only not moving. They were what we had in private houses.

Keir-Hardie. (*Incredulous*) But if the staircase didn't move, I don't see how you got up?

Mr. Shaw. By treading first on one step and then the other, like this. (*Lifts his feet, and sets them down again.*)

Keir-Hardie. (*Shudders*) But surely that must have been frightfully dangerous?

F.B.O. It mikes me fair giddy to think of it! (*The staircase stops.*)

KEIR-HARDIE. Hullo! It has stopped again. Is this how you mean? (*He sets one foot on the ascending band, when the staircase starts again with a rush, nearly upsetting him.*) Whatever's the matter with it? I never knew it go wrong like that, before.

F.B.O. It's the operators as is doing this on purpose, your lordship. They wants to ave their day reduced to three hours, same as the turncocks; and as the Goverment won't give in to them, they're making theirselves as nasty as they can. (*He closes the doors.*)

KEIR-HARDIE. Selfish brutes! Can't they see that the less they work the more somebody else has got to work, to make up?

F.B.O. Oh, yes, I'xpect they knows that well enough: but what they says is that it's a case of each one for isself, and devil take the indmost, in this ere blessed Commonwealth. (*He begins dusting the table.*)

KEIR-HARDIE. (*Bitterly, to* MR. SHAW) They seem to be merely trying to carry out your principles: "Only those who have helped themselves know how to help others." They have evidently begun by helping themselves.

MR. SHAW. Did I say that?

KEIR-HARDIE Yes; it is in your *Quintessence of Ibsenism*. But perhaps that is one of the things that you are going to explain to the meeting.

MR. SHAW. You will hear what I have to say to the meeting, when it begins.

KEIR-HARDIE. I am not so sure of that. The

chances are that you will be howled down the moment you take off your mask.

Mr. Shaw. Does that mean that you are going to give the signal ?

Keir-Hardie. I shall do no more and no less than I promised. I have brought you here in safety, and I shall tell the meeting that I consider you are under my safe-conduct. But I don't guarantee you a hearing. It is not too late for you to go back to your worshippers, if you are afraid.

Mr. Shaw. It is my worshippers whom I am most afraid of. They all seem to be under a vow to marry me. I left three of them on their way to the offices of the Connubial Board.

Keir-Hardie. Every member of the Anti-Shavian League is under a vow to take your life.

Mr. Shaw. Quite so : but I think on the whole this is better than the Connubial Board.

F.B.O. I only opes for your sike, Master, that none of them there Romeos and Juliets wont do nuffink worse than go to the Connubial Board. It's the Medical Board what I'm afeared of.

Mr. Shaw. Nonsense. What can they do ? There's nothing the matter with me.

Keir-Hardie. What has that got to do with it ? Do you suppose, if the Government wanted to put you out of the way, they would have any difficulty in getting a medical certificate ? In your time were there no such people as Court Physicians ? And yet you say : " We Socialists have studied human nature."

Mr. Shaw. No, I'm damned if I ever said that.

KEIR-HARDIE. I am quoting from *Merrie England.*

MR. SHAW. I didn't write *Merrie England.* That was Blatchford.

KEIR-HARDIE. I'm afraid your memory is rather treacherous. There is no doubt about the authorship. We have reduced textual criticism to an exact science, and all our best scholars are unanimous on the point. (*Goes to the table.*) I can show it to you in your collected Works.

MR. SHAW. (*Follows him, and notices the dummy.*) What on earth is that thing ?

KEIR-HARDIE. (*Surprised*) Do you mean the Chairman ?

MR. SHAW. Chairman ! That thing there ? Do you mean to tell me that you hold your meetings by machinery ; or is this a joke ?

KEIR-HARDIE. I am sorry that you should think any Socialist capable of a joke. Besides, joking is forbidden by Act of Parliament. If you had ever been a sincere Socialist you would rejoice to see that it is no longer necessary to invest one man with authority over his fellows. Perfect equality is achieved by means of this mechanical chairman, who excites no jealousy.

MR. SHAW. I should have thought that a Socialist like you would have been jealous of even a gramophone. But how does the thing work ?

F.B.O. Easy enough : all you as to do is to drop a penny in is ead to start im, and anuvver every time e runs down.

MR. SHAW. Penny ? I thought you told me that money had been abolished ?

KEIR-HARDIE. So it has. A penny is not money. It is a round copper token which represents five minutes' work by an able-bodied man, —the twelfth of an hour. The hour is represented by a silver token called a shilling, and a week of twenty hours by a golden one, known as a pound. The Comrades receive these tokens in acknowledgement of their labour, and exchange them for rations and clothes from the municipal supply stores.

MR. SHAW. And you don't call that money? Show me a penny. (*F.B.O. gives him one.*) I don't see any difference between this and the coins of the Twentieth Century, except that it is worse made.

KEIR-HARDIE. The difference is in the principle. That is a Socialist penny, purified from the evil associations of Capitalism, and stamped with the Brotherhood of Man.

MR. SHAW. It is stamped with the head of some Asiatic potentate, I presume the Emperor of India. But let me see how it works. (*He drops it in the slot.*)

THE MECHANICAL CHAIRMAN. (*After a series of preliminary squeaking coughs*) **Order, order! I call upon the Secretary to read the minutes of the last meeting.**

MR. SHAW. Wonderful! It is certainly an improvement on some of the chairmen I have had to endure. But can you contrive to make it always say the right thing at the right time?

KEIR-HARDIE. Well, that is the difficulty. However, we hope the invention will be improved

in time. Anything is better than having to submit to the dictation of an individual.

F.B.O. Perhaps the Master might like a drop of the Solution, before the meeting begins. (*Leads the way to the barrel.*)

Mr. Shaw. (*Following*) What have you got there? I thought alcoholic drinks had been abolished.

Keir-Hardie. (*Following*) Of course they have. Even the Solution is forbidden by the Medical Board, though it is a perfectly innocent beverage made from hops and barley. But the Comrades drink it a good deal on the sly.

F.B.O. (*He draws a mug of beer.*) This aint no alcoolic drink, bless yer. You might give it to a babby.

Mr. Shaw. It looks uncommonly like beer.

Keir-Hardie. It may seem so to one who is not yet familiar with the beneficent results of temperance legislation. The taint of the Capitalist Age seems to cling to you.

F.B.O. (*Blows off the froth, and hands the mug to* Mr. Shaw.) We dont old with them there Capiterlist drinks nowadays. You taste that.

Mr. Shaw. It smells just like beer.

Keir-Hardie. I daresay it does, in your own evil imagination. To the pure all things are pure.

Mr. Shaw. I hope you don't credit me with having said that. (*Drinks.*) It *is* beer!

Keir-Hardie. For shame!

The Mechanical Chairman. **Gentlemen, is it your pleasure that I now sign these minutes?**

F.B.O. Ush! Ere they comes!

MR. SHAW *hastily replaces his mask. The doors are burst open, and as many Comrades as the benches will hold stream through on to the stage, stumbling and falling over one another.*

THE MECHANICAL CHAIRMAN. **Order! I call upon the mover of the first resolution.**

A Comrade shuts the doors. LORD KEIR-HARDIE *passes through the crowd, nodding and shaking hands, and seats himself in the secretary's chair.*

F.B.O. (*To* MR. SHAW) You sit ere alongside o me. (*They seat themselves on the hindmost bench, at the end next to the footlights. The Comrades spread themselves over the remaining seats, some of them staring inquisitively at* MR. SHAW.)

KEIR-HARDIE. (*Opens the book, and rises*) As it is so late, I will open the meeting at once, in the usual way, by reading you two passages from the writings of our Arch-Adversary—who has at last awakened to see the results of his teaching. (*Groans.*) The first is from *Merrie England*, which I have learned already that he actually denies having written. (*Shame!*) I am not surprised!

(*Reads.*) "Practical Socialism would educate the people. It would provide cheap and pure food. (*Oh, oh!*) It would extend and elevate the means of study and amusement. (*A laugh.*) It would foster literature and science and art. (*Rot!*) It would abolish sweating and jerry work. (*It hasn't!*) It would demolish the slums, and erect good and

handsome dwellings. (*Where are they?*) It would compel all men to do some kind of useful work. (*Except the Fabians!*) It would protect women and children. (*Hisses.*) It would raise the standard of health and morality." (*Loud groans.*)

The other passage is from *Man and Superman* —I don't know——

THE MECHANICAL CHAIRMAN. **Time!**

KEIR-HARDIE. —I don't know whether he will deny having written that as well.

(*Reads.*) "There are limits to what a mule or an ass will stand——

THE MECHANICAL CHAIRMAN. **I call upon the speaker to resume his seat.**

KEIR-HARDIE. (*Apologetically, to the dummy*) One moment, sir. (*Reads.*) "—But Man will suffer himself to be degraded until his vileness becomes so loathsome to his oppressors that they themselves are forced to reform it." (*Hisses, and cries of Shame!* KEIR-HARDIE *closes the book.*) Gentlemen—for I will not insult you with the odious name of Comrades—those are the sentiments of the man in whose name you are ground down by the most intolerable form of slavery the world has ever heard of. (*Applause.*) We have met here to-night——

THE MECHANICAL CHAIRMAN. **Order, Order!**

KEIR-HARDIE. (*Annoyed*) I am in order. I say we have met here to-night in an hour of crisis. At the very moment we were preparing to rise against the whole odious system of what is falsely called Socialism, the kiss of a Jezebel——

THE MECHANICAL CHAIRMAN. **Does any one second that ?**

F.B.O. (*Stands up*) I will, if you like, your Excellency.

KEIR-HARDIE. Sit down, you fool ; I haven't finished. (*F.B.O. obeys.*) All this is your fault for starting it too soon.—What was I saying ?—The kiss of a Jezebel has called the Founder of the accursed system to life, in order to rivet the chain more firmly on your necks. (*Hisses.*) As your Secretary, the responsibility is cast upon me of advising you how to deal with the situation. But first of all I have a startling announcement to make to the meeting. Mr. Bernard Shaw (*Groans*), who has heard of the existence of this League, (*Hear, hear !*) has had—shall I say the audacity ?—to express a wish to enrol himself in our ranks (*Oh, oh ! and laughter.*) He has applied to me for permission to come here and address you. (*No, no !*) I foresaw how you would be likely to receive that request. But on the other hand it struck me that by allowing him to come here we should secure a hostage for our own safety. (*Interruption.*) Order, there ! As your Secretary I have taken the responsibility upon myself of bringing him here—(*Murmurs*)—under my protection. (*Silence.*) I call upon him to come forward.

Amid continuous murmurs of surprise LORD KEIR-HARDIE *sits down.* MR. SHAW *comes forward and stands in front of the empty chair. As he takes off his hat and mask and faces the meeting, the*

murmuring dies away in silent stupefaction.

THE MECHANICAL CHAIRMAN. **Gentlemen, you have heard the resolution proposed and seconded: those who are in favour will say "Aye"**—(*A silent pause*)—**contrary, "No"**—(*A loud and unanimous shout of No!*)—**the Ayes have it: I declare the resolution carried.**

The gramophone runs down in a prolonged shrill squeak, drowned by an outburst of angry Noes, the Comrades all standing up and shaking their fists at MR. SHAW. *He looks round smiling.* KEIR-HARDIE *raises his hands to still the tumult, and at last blows the horn. At length the Comrades resume their seats, and the noise dies away.*

MR. SHAW. Comrades! (*Renewed clamour.*)

KEIR-HARDIE. (*Blows the horn.*) Order, order!

MR. SHAW. Comrades! (*Interruption.*)

KEIR-HARDIE. (*He stands up while speaking.*) We feel that name to be as an insult. We prefer to be addressed as gentlemen. (*Applause.*)

MR. SHAW. I stand here as Comrade A. 1. (*He throws off his robes, revealing that he is in the dress of a Comrade. There is a general gasp of astonishment, followed by perfect silence.*) Fellow Comrades! (*He pauses and looks round. No one dares to interrupt.*) I have come here to denounce an impostor. (*Oh, oh!*) One who has been lying to you for more years than I care to think——

VOICES. Who? Name!

MR. SHAW. Who has masqueraded as your deliverer from Capitalism, but who has only plunged you into a still worse slavery.

VOICES. (*Angrily*) Who ? Who ? Name ?

MR. SHAW. Who has been a traitor to Humanity, under the cloak of friendship. (*Continuous interruption, the cry of* "Name" *emerging above the general clamour.*) His name is Bernard Shaw. (*Sudden silence, followed, as the surprise wears off, by a faint attempt at ironical applause here and there.*)

KEIR-HARDIE. (*Rising*) I don't know if this is a bad joke——

MR. SHAW. Keep your seat, sir. (KEIR-HARDIE *obeys.*) Your Secretary thinks I am a humorist. (*A mocking laugh.*) That is one of the false pretences I have come here to expose. I have no sense of humour. I am simply a mischievous crank. (*Impatient murmurs.*)

KEIR-HARDIE. Keep to the question. (*Applause.*)

MR. SHAW. I am the question. This is a meeting of the Anti-Shavian League. (*Loud applause.*) I am glad that you agree with me at last.

A VOICE. We don't.

MR. SHAW. What don't you agree with ? Aren't you an Anti-Shavian ?

KEIR-HARDIE. Are you ?

MR. SHAW. Why don't you listen ? (*Loud interruption.* KEIR-HARDIE *blows his horn in vain.* MR. SHAW *raises his voice in a momentary lull.*) Are you afraid to hear me ? (*Dead silence.*)

I blame myself, not you. I am responsible for the frightful system which has robbed you of your manhood, and made you strangers to such a thing as free speech. (*Groans.*) You may well groan at me. The question is how are you to get rid of me ?

KEIR-HARDIE. Speak seriously, please.

MR. SHAW. (*To the meeting.*) This is the first time I ever have spoken seriously. I have never been awake till now. I have been nothing but a dreamer—and you are my dream. I am extremely sorry that you have come true. I wish you were only a nightmare. (*Hisses.*) Those hisses warn me that you are real.

KEIR-HARDIE. I protest against this. (*Hear, hear !*)

MR. SHAW. So do I. That is just what I am trying to do, if you will only let me. I protest against myself. I consider that I am a public nuisance. (*Enthusiastic applause.*) I am glad to hear those cheers. That is a good beginning. But you don't know the worst of me yet. You think I am a Socialist. That is another false pretence. In reality I am a great Individualist—the greatest who has ever lived, in my opinion. I am the apostle of self-assertion. It was my uncontrollable vanity that made me a rebel against the Capitalist Age. It had its faults, I admit, but it was a paradise compared with this. (*Applause.*)

KEIR-HARDIE. Then why did you preach Socialism ?

MR. SHAW. Because I didn't know any better. I have just told you that I was a crank. All truly

great men are cranks. That is how they achieve their objects, by shutting their eyes to facts, and their ears to reason. That is what I did, I believed that men were right-angled triangles. I thought an Act of Parliament could repeal the history of the human race. I thought that if children could be stolen from their mothers, and herded in prisons under warders who had never had a child, they would grow up perfect beings. I expected a clerk chosen by competitive examination to be wiser than Providence. I believed that virtue could be supplied from a generating-station, like gas and electricity, by the cubic foot. I expected to change greed into honesty by changing coins into paper tickets. I hoped that what Christianity had failed to do in two thousand years could be done in a few hours by a bundle of resolutions passed by a committee of quarrelsome cranks like myself. And I was a fool. (*Loud applause.*) I don't want your applause. I want you to be angry with me—as angry as I am with you.

F.B.O. (*Distressed*) What for, Master ?

Mr. Shaw. For taking me seriously.

Keir-Hardie. You are complaining of the triumph of your own principles.

Mr. Shaw. Well, and have you forgotten what I said about the Superman—meaning myself ? I said that the triumph of his principles meant their degradation to the common level, his teaching being accepted by the mob just as the teaching of St. John was accepted by cannibals (*Murmurs*), or the philosophy of Plato by an Oxford undergraduate. (*Louder murmurs.*)

F.B.O. (*In pained reproach*) Ere, that'll do, Master ! We don't want none of them names.

KEIR-HARDIE. (*Bewildered*) But—but—look here : if you don't want your own principles to triumph, then I'm hanged if I can tell what you do want !

MR. SHAW. I can tell you what we all want : good temper and common sense. After all this time, can't you see yet that the whole art and science of politics and sociology is to get hold of intelligent and capable men, and make it worth their while to serve you honourably ? Your policy is to rid the world of brains. What you call Socialism is nothing but spite and jealousy. (*Points to the Mechanical Chairman.*) And this is what it has brought you to. There is the Socialist ideal !

KEIR-HARDIE. It would work very well if the mechanism were a little more perfect.

MR. SHAW. Good gracious, man, can't you see that it doesn't work at all ? You have been conducting this meeting, not that penny tin-whistle. I am beginning to think that the whole world has been asleep for two hundred years, and that I am the only one who has awaked.

F.B.O. What do you want us to do, Master ?

MR. SHAW. Take me for your Chairman ! (*Prolonged applause, during which* MR. SHAW *sits in the vacant chair.*)

KEIR-HARDIE. (*Stands*) I rise to order——

MR. SHAW. (*Stands*) I rule you out of order ! (*Vigorous applause, followed by hisses, and cries of —Order ! Sit down !* KEIR-HARDIE *sullenly gives*

way.) We have had enough speeches ; I want to see whether you are prepared to act.

KEIR-HARDIE. What do you propose ? (*Cries of—Order !*)

MR. SHAW. You call yourselves Anti-Shavians : if you are in earnest let us begin by pulling down the Shaw Memorial Hall. (*Loud applause, the Comrades rising and waving pocket-handkerchiefs of brown calico.*)

KEIR-HARDIE. What good will that do ? (*Angry hisses.*)

F.B.O. Turn him out !

MR. SHAW. If you do that he may go and warn the other Fabians. (*Angry groans; the Comrades shake their fists at* KEIR-HARDIE.) Leave him alone, he has come here under my protection ! (*Sharply*) Order ! (*The clamour ceases instantly.*) As soon as we have finished with the Fabians, we will go on to the Houses of Parliament and turn out the women. (*Applause.*) After that, we can tackle the Maharajah—(*Loud applause*)—and the Medical Board. (*A universal gasp of dismay, followed by dead silence. The Comrades shrink back, and those at the back begin sitting down.*) What is the matter with you now ?

VOICE. (*Of The* MARCHIONESS OF HOLLOWAY *outside*) Help !

The nearest Comrades go to the doors and open them. The staircase has stopped, and only the lower part of the MARCHIONESS'S *figure is visible. She is standing on the downward band, about*

three feet above the level of the floor, clutching the handrail with one hand, while the other clasps a document partly printed and partly written.

F.B.O. (*He comes and stands in the doorway, facing her.*) Jump, and I'll catch you.

MARCHIONESS. (*Anxiously*) Do you think you're strong enough ?

F.B.O. Back me up, mates. (*A number of the Comrades form a wedge behind him.*) Now !

The staircase starts abruptly, causing the MARCHIONESS *to spring through the air into the arms of F.B.O., who falls backward, bringing all the Comrades to the ground. The* MARCHIONESS *stumbles, but comes upright, still tightly clasping the document.*

KEIR-HARDIE. (*Coming to her assistance*) Marchioness ! What has brought you here ? (*He closes the doors.*)

MARCHIONESS. I am looking for my husband. (MR. SHAW *snatches up his cloak, and tries to put it on.*) Ah, I have found him ! Look ! (*Holds out the document.*)

MR. SHAW. (*Crossly*) Well, what is that ?

MARCHIONESS. (*With loving triumph*) Our marriage lines !

MR. SHAW. Merciful heavens ! But we can't be married already.

MARCHIONESS. We are. I have just married you by proxy at the offices of the Connubial Board. (*In a voice of dreamy rapture, holding out*

her arms.) You are mine—for a fortnight! (MR. SHAW *recoils in dismay.*)

The doors open again and LADY WELLS *staggers on to the stage, holding a similar document. F.B.O. closes the door and remains near it.*

LADY WELLS. Is he here?

MR. SHAW. Another of them! This is bigamy!

LADY WELLS. (*Sees, and goes towards him.*) My Greek god!

MR. SHAW. I don't mind being your Greek god. I was afraid you were going to call me your husband.

LADY WELLS. That is the coarse, mundane way of putting it. Behold! (*She holds out the document.*) The title-deed of paradise!

MR. SHAW. Madam, I am surprised at you. Do you realize that you are speaking to a married man? This lady has just told me that I am hers —for a fortnight.

LADY WELLS. (*Exultingly*) And you are mine for the next fortnight!

MR. SHAW. Oh! (*Collapses.*) I seem to be a sort of contingent remainder.

Voices in dispute are heard outside. The doors open, and the PERMANENT LADY'S MAID *emerges, dragging the* PERMANENT PRIME MINISTRESS *by one hand, and holding a bundle of papers in the other. F.B.O. closes the doors.*

This must be the residuary legatee!

LADY'S MAID. (*In the tone of a nurse to a fretful child*) Come along. The gentleman won't bite you.

MR. SHAW. Here! I can't be a party to an abduction.

LADY'S MAID. (*In her official voice*) I have the honour to announce that Her Highness has bestowed her hand in marriage on you, at the offices of the Connubial Board.

MR. SHAW. The Board seem to be working at high pressure. They will have to increase their staff.

PRIME MINISTRESS. (*Looks round in despair.*) But this is the wrong one.

MR. SHAW. Ah, a slight mistake—very natural in such a rush of business at the office. No doubt it can easily be put right.

LADY'S MAID. There is no mistake, sir. (*Holds out the papers.*) These are the marriage settlements. They take effect one month from to-day.

MR. SHAW. I will make a note of the date, but I have a good many other engagements. You had better drop me a postcard to remind me.

PRIME MINISTRESS. You promised me that I should have the other gentleman.

LADY'S MAID. It is all right: so you shall, in another fortnight.

MR. SHAW. Make it a week if you like. Anything to oblige a lady.

PRIME MINISTRESS. (*After a good look at* MR. SHAW) I can't bear this one.

MR. SHAW. In the Capitalist Age it was usual to reserve these observations till after the honeymoon. I am afraid I shall have to apply to the Connubial Board for a divorce.

LADY'S MAID. (*Astonished*) Divorce!

MARCHIONESS. (*Stirred to the depths of her nature*) Divorce!

LADY WELLS. We have no divorce in the Social Commonwealth. With us marriage is a sacred bond.

MR. SHAW. It seems to be payable in instalments. (*Noise without.*) What, are the Board still at it?

> LORD BLATCHFORD *is hurled on to the stage with violence. This time the staircase stops, and the doors remain open.* MR. SHAW *looks relieved.*

I see it is only a case of adoption this time.

BLATCHFORD. Impersonation, you mean. You are an impostor, sir!

MR. SHAW. Of course! The very thing I was going to suggest.

BLATCHFORD. I believe that you are no more Bernard Shaw than I am.

MR. SHAW. Good man! Does this entitle me to a declaration of nullity of marriage—of all my marriages?

MARCHIONESS. (*In tones of strong authority*) No!

PRIME MINISTRESS. Oh, I hope so!

LADY WELLS. Not in my case. I love you for yourself alone, with a pure soul-love!

BLATCHFORD. If you have taken advantage of these confiding women to set up a harem the first night, that makes your case ten times worse. I wonder you don't claim to be Bluebeard. You seem to know the part.

KEIR-HARDIE. Have you discovered anything?

BLATCHFORD. I have discovered that the real Bernard Shaw was beheaded for high treason in the reign of Old King Cole.

PRIME MINISTRESS. (*Claps her hands.*) I *am* glad!

BLATCHFORD. Fortunately the matter has been taken out of our hands. This pretender has been reported to the Medical Board. (*The Comrades gaze at each other in consternation.*)

LADY WELLS. (*She grasps* MR. SHAW'S *arm, and clings to him*) Oh, fly! Fly this instant!

MR. SHAW. How can I fly when you are holding me?

BLATCHFORD. It is useless. The sanitary staff are outside. (*The electric light goes out, leaving the stage in darkness.*)

MR. SHAW. Who did that? Turn on the light again.

F.B.O. We can't.

LADY WELLS. It has been turned off by the Municipal Supply. They turn it off every night at nine o'clock.

MR. SHAW. It's like supper after the theatre.

LADY WELLS. Too late!

The staircase moves again. A number of Nurses carrying electric torches come in, and range themselves round the door. They are followed by the MUNICIPAL PHYSICIAN, *and two Municipal Dispensers, all three dressed like Inquisitors in black gowns with peaked hoods.* LADY

WELLS *remains by* MR. SHAW ; *the rest shrink back.*

PHYSICIAN. (*To* BLATCHFORD) Which is the case ? (BLATCHFORD *points to* MR. SHAW.)

MR. SHAW. What are you ? one of my fathers-in-law ?

PHYSICIAN. I am the Municipal Physician.

MR. SHAW. You are too soon. You had better call again in nine months.

PHYSICIAN. You are my patient. I caution you that whatever you say may be taken down, and recorded on your medical chart. (*The first Dispenser produces a note-book.*) You are suspected of cerebral abnormality. (*Moans from the Comrades.*) Let me feel your pulse.

MR. SHAW. You had better not touch me. I don't know what it is, but I might give it to you.

PHYSICIAN. (*To the Dispenser, in a calm, bedside voice*) Symptoms of nervous irritability, accompanied by morbid aversion to medical treatment. (*The Dispenser writes. To* MR. SHAW) Do you sometimes have a feeling of pressure in the anterior lobes of the occiput ?

LADY WELLS. Don't answer. You are entitled to reserve your symptoms.

MR. SHAW. I won't. (*To Physician.*) I am sorry to tell you that I am not entitled to your kind services. I have just remembered that I never affixed my stamp last Monday.

LADY WELLS. Saved ! He is not insured !

PHYSICIAN. Foiled ! (*Indignantly to* BLATCHFORD) You have brought me here for nothing.

BLATCHFORD. (*Nobly*) I will pay his threepence. (*Tenders the amount.*)

PHYSICIAN. Really, this is very informal, but under the circumstances—(*Takes the threepence. To* MR. SHAW)—When did you last see a doctor ?

MR. SHAW. I believe about two hundred years ago.

PHYSICIAN. (*Shakes his head seriously.*) It is seldom wise to go so long. Where is your medical certificate ?

MR. SHAW. Haven't got one. But I can offer you three marriage certificates.

PHYSICIAN. That settles it. (*Nods to Dispenser, who puts up his note-book.*) The patient has confessed to being at large without a medical licence. (*To* MR. SHAW) Consider yourself invalided.

LADY WELLS. O spare him !

MR. SHAW. (*To Physician*) I consider you an idiot.

PHYSICIAN. (*Nods with a satisfied air.*) The infallible symptom !—questioning the sanity of the physician. (*To the Nurses*) Take him to the ambulance. (*The Nurses approach.*)

MR. SHAW. Hands off !

PHYSICIAN. If the patient is fractious give him the hygienic waistcoat.

MR. SHAW. (*Calls*) Comrades ! (*They keep still.*) Are there no men amongst you ? (*F.B.O. and a few more move forward half-heartedly.*)

PHYSICIAN. Take sanitary precautions ! (*The Dispensers suddenly produce small glass bombs, like electric lamps, which they hold up ready to*

throw. The would-be rescuers crowd back, uttering cries of terror.)

LADY WELLS. (*Catches* MR. SHAW'S *arm.*) Oh, be careful! One drop is fatal.

MR. SHAW. What, do these fiends throw vitriol?

LADY WELLS. Far worse—it is the Disinfectant!

KEIR-HARDIE. Don't pretend that you have forgotten that, too. This was the means by which your followers set up the Social Commonwealth.

MR. SHAW. Did they? (*Lets his arms fall.*) Put on the strait-waistcoat.

ACT DROP.

And other drops at the option of the audience.

ACT III

Stage Directions.

The scene is laid in the Cabinet of His Vice-Majesty Maharajah Sri Singh Mahindar Adhiraj Ranjisinghji Bahadur, K.G., Viceroy of England.

In the back wall, but towards the left of the audience (for the sake of variety), is a French window, accessible from without by aeroplane. In the right wall, towards the back, is a door.

Against whichever wall may be most convenient to the stage carpenter is a clock, marking about half-past eleven a.m. On the back wall, to the right of the window, hangs a large map of the world on Mercator's projection, reminding the audience of what the British Empire has been brought to by Socialism. India and England are coloured in the familiar red; Ireland, Scotland and Wales, which have united in a Celtic Republic, are green; Australia is yellow, South Africa is black, and Canada is striped pink and white, having adopted the flag of the United States. The rest of the map is colourless. Against the right wall, between the footlights and the door, stands a pedestal supporting a gruesome Hindu God with three heads and numerous arms, to admonish thoughtless bishops in the stalls that our Christian country has now passed beneath the rule of an Idolater.

The most important property is a flat writing-table, about six feet by three, with an armchair behind it, backing on to the left wall. The table is endways on to the audience, and in the end next to the footlights is a conspicuous white button, fixed just under the edge of the table, so as to be within reach of the VICEROY'S *right hand, when he is seated at his desk, while out of sight of callers. On the table are a hand-bell and the usual writing appliances.*

Facing this desk, or writing-table (for which the English language has no recognized name—the French call it a "sécretaire" or "escritoire"), so as to come to the middle of the stage, is another armchair, fixed to the floor. Half-a-dozen other chairs of the expensively uncomfortable kind usually found in Government Departments are ranged round the walls. The rest of the furniture and fittings are in the splendid, but barbaric, taste of the Asiatic despot.

As soon as the curtain has risen the MUNSHI *comes in by the door, which he closes behind him. He carries the familiar official flat basket, piled about two feet high with serious-looking papers, and sets it down on the table at the end next to the window.*

MUNSHI. The Maharajah is late again. (*He glances at the clock.*) More than half-past eleven. (*Shakes his head.*) Up again all last night as usual, I suppose. These English houris are abandoned beyond belief. (*Goes to the window and looks out.*) Ah, that is his plane.

The MUNSHI *opens the window, and salaams. The plane stops outside, and the* VICEROY *alights, stepping in through the window. He is dressed in magnificent robes, with a jewelled turban; and wears bracelets and earrings; but his air is dissipated, and he dares not ask a blessing from the office Idol. The* MUNSHI *prostrates himself.*

VICEROY. Continue to live.

MUNSHI. (*Rises*) Health to the Eagle of Velocity!

VICEROY. (*Walks up to the table, and frowns at the papers.*) What is all this rubbish?

MUNSHI. Merciful Lawgiver, these are the Acts of Parliament passed yesterday, subject to your gracious assent.

VICEROY. (*Sits down heavily.*) These natives must be mad. The laws of India have not been changed since the days of Manu. Is there anything that I need hear about?

MUNSHI. (*He takes a memorandum off the top of the pile, and glances down it.*) There is an Act fixing the length of the Comrades' hair at an inch and a half, O Hirsute One.

VICEROY. Why, I thought I assented to an Act about that only last week.

MUNSHI. Prodigy of Recollection, the Act last week fixed it at an inch and a quarter. Before then it was an inch.

VICEROY. Meddlesome fools! (*Snatches the Bill and signs it.*)

MUNSHI. The last bye-election was won by the hairdressers' vote, and they want to do less work, Industrious One.

VICEROY. So do I. (*Snatches the next Bill.*) What's this about ?

MUNSHI. That is the Act for the Codification of the Laws of Golf Amendment Act, Further Amendment Act, may it please your Vice-Majesty.

VICEROY. Hullo ! I can't have my golf interfered with. What do they want to do now ?

MUNSHI. The new Minister for Sport is a member of the Caddies' Union, O Niblick of the Universe. The Act provides that the players shall carry their own clubs, and pick up their own balls.

VICEROY. And what on earth are the caddies to do ?

MUNSHI. They are to use the language, Most Eloquent One.

VICEROY. Then I wish I had one of them here, now. (*Tears up the Bill, and throws it into a wastepaper basket.*) Any more practical jokes ?

MUNSHI. The hours of the Moving Staircase Operators have been reduced to three, by an Act passed in special Session.

VICEROY. What was that for ?

MUNSHI. Because, after the House had adjourned, the operators refused to work the staircase by which the members leave, Inquisitive One ; so they had to go back and pass this Act in order to get home.

VICEROY. (*Signing*) I wish the operators would refuse to let them into the House, next time. Is that all ?

MUNSHI. All that would interest the Tulip of Common Sense. There are the usual improvements in the grammar of Esperanto.

VICEROY. (*Signing the Bills in rapid succession*) Any rise or fall in the Budget to-day ?

MUNSHI. (*He picks out the Estimates.*) The Ministers have raised their own salaries by twenty years.

VICEROY. (*Leaves off signing.*) Don't talk that Socialist nonsense to me. What is it in rupees ?

MUNSHI. O Ready Reckoner, it is ten thousand.

VICEROY. Let me see, my commission on that is a hundred thousand, isn't it ?

MUNSHI. (*Bows*) If your Vice-Majesty graciously assents to the Estimates.

VICEROY. Ahem ! Give them to me—I trust that I am no tyrant. (*Signs with an air of much amiability.*) By the way, what is this excitement among the natives ?

MUNSHI. As far as I can make out, it is some trouble about a god, Most Pious One.

VICEROY. Dear me, I hope we aren't going to have another religious riot. Is it that one with a horse's head, that gives oracles ?

MUNSHI. No, Patron of the Turf——

VICEROY. Because the last time he tipped the wrong horse for the Derby his priests were nearly lynched.

MUNSHI. (*With feeling*) They deserved it, Mirror of Justice. I had put my turban on the beast. But this is the idol of the Fabians.

VICEROY. Well, what is the matter with him ?

MUNSHI. They are giving out that he has just

awakened, after lying asleep for two hundred years.

VICEROY. Then I should think it was about time he did wake.

MUNSHI. (*Doubles up with laughter*) O Elephant of Wit, you will be the death of me !

VICEROY. (*Pleased with his effort*) Yes, I flatter myself that was rather neat. Would you like to hear it again ?

MUNSHI. (*Becoming grave*) Your slave is unworthy of so much honour ; but the Fabians are in attendance, and they will assuredly be ravished by it.

VICEROY. (*Giving up the idea of an encore with some reluctance*) What do they want ?

MUNSHI. They pray Your Vice-Majesty to grant them an audience, on business of urgent public interest.

VICEROY. Ahem ! Have you told them that it is my birthday ?

MUNSHI. I told them that last month, O Ageless One. This time I said it was the birthday of your exalted twin brother. They hope that you will deign to accept a small offering of rupees on his behalf.

VICEROY. How much is it ?

MUNSHI. Loadstone of Perquisites, it is a lakh.

VICEROY. Ah ! They must want to see me very badly if they offer as much as that. Tell them that I have two twin brothers.

MUNSHI. I will inform the head Begum, O Incomparable Business Man. (*Goes out.*)

VICEROY. (*He resumes the work of signing the Bills without reading them.*) That will just pay for Florrie's diamonds.—I must really get a rubber stamp.

The MUNSHI *shows in the* MARCHIONESS OF HOLLOWAY, LADY WELLS, *and* LORDS BLATCHFORD and KEIR-HARDIE.

MUNSHI. Their Excellencies the Hereditary Fabians. (*All salaam to the* VICEROY, *who nods to them with condescension.*)

VICEROY. Let them be seated. (*The* MUNSHI *bows the* MARCHIONESS *to the fixed chair, and brings forward three others. The Fabians sit in a row curving round so as to face the* VICEROY *and the audience.*

MARCHIONESS. We venture to hope that your Vice-Majesty will treat this interview as confidential.

VICEROY. (*Beckons the* MUNSHI, *and speaks in his ear.*) Have you got the money?

MUNSHI. (*Speaks in H.V.M.'s ear.*) They wouldn't trust me with it.

VICEROY. (*Aloud*) Then get out.

The MUNSHI *gets out.*

MARCHIONESS. We have been gratified to learn that this is a joyful anniversary in your exalted family. We trust that we are not guilty of presumption in asking you to accept a token of our loyalty, on behalf of your——(*Pauses, and looks for help to* BLATCHFORD)

BLATCHFORD. Brother.

VICEROY. (*Sharply*) Brothers.

MARCHIONESS. Thank you,—your illustrious brothers. (*The* VICEROY *bows graciously.*)

BLATCHFORD. May I have the honour? (*He lays a sealed envelope on the table.*)

MARCHIONESS. We have come about a very serious matter——

VICEROY. (*He has snatched up the envelope, and is tearing it open.*) Wait: I haven't counted it. (*He takes out what is called in the American language a wad of bills, and checks the amount, the Fabians anxiously looking on; then gives a satisfied nod, and leans back in his chair.*) In the name of my brothers Your Excellencies may command me. Proceed.

MARCHIONESS. Yesterday, about this hour, Comrade A. 1, otherwise known as Bernard Shaw, awoke.

VICEROY. Is that the idol?

MARCHIONESS. We revered him as one. We believed in him as the Founder of our Order, the Hero of the Social Revolution.

VICEROY. (*Leading up to a repetition of his successful* mot) How long had he been asleep?

MARCHIONESS. Over two hundred years.

VICEROY. Then I should think it was about time he did wake. (*He chuckles. The Fabians, to whom this is no laughing matter, show disappointment and distress.*)

MARCHIONESS. I am sorry Your Vice-Majesty takes that view of it.

VICEROY. (*Resentfully*) I intended my observation as an example of light and graceful badinage. My Munshi thought it excellent.

FABIANS. (*Ensemble*) Of course! How funny! Stupid of us! (*They laugh with servility.*)

VICEROY. (*Mollified*) I see you are not educated up to Futurist humour. My Munshi nearly rolled on the floor with laughter.

MARCHIONESS. (*Nervous*) Lord Keir-Hardie is the middle-weight Tango champion. Perhaps he will roll. (KEIR-HARDIE *shows uneasiness.*)

VICEROY. I will excuse you this time. I prefer the mirth excited by my humour to be more spontaneous. If I make this joke again I hope you will be on the *qui vive.*

MARCHIONESS. Perhaps Your Vice-Majesty would not mind touching the bell beforehand.

VICEROY. (*Severely*) That ought not to be necessary.

KEIR-HARDIE. The fact is that we are rather out of practice. An Act of Parliament was passed under your predecessor by which the penalty for joking is forty shillings.

VICEROY. I will have it repealed. But you haven't told me how your god came to wake up.

MARCHIONESS. I am ashamed to tell you. It was the doing of Lady Wells.

VICEROY. (*He turns to* LADY WELLS *with a smile that may be described as masculine.*) And what *did* you do?

LADY WELLS. (*Lowers her eyes in a manner that may be described as feminine.*) I only kissed him.

BLATCHFORD. You said—" If only the Master would awake for twenty-four hours." I heard you.

VICEROY. (*He adopts an amorous tone which jars unpleasantly on the other Fabians, but appears much less obnoxious to* LADY WELLS.) Lucky sleeper ! I declare I feel only half awake, myself.

MARCHIONESS. (*Sternly*) Your Vice-Majesty is not aware that the object of this unbecoming conduct is now my husband.

VICEROY. No ; is he ? That does make a difference. I withdraw my remarks.

LADY WELLS. He will be mine this day fortnight.

MARCHIONESS. (*With significance*) If he is still alive.

VICEROY. (*Ogling* LADY WELLS) Ah, is that so ? That must be prevented at all costs.

MARCHIONESS. I am glad to hear you say so. The fact is that Lady Wells' rash act threatens to have very serious consequences. The Comrades are in a state of ferment about it.

VICEROY. (*Continuing to regard the question chiefly as one between himself and* LADY WELLS) No doubt it has provoked envy !

BLATCHFORD. (*Impatiently*) It threatens to provoke civil war.

VICEROY. Ah, so there is a rival in the field already !

MARCHIONESS. (*Really angry*) Your Vice-Majesty is pleased to treat it as a joke.

VICEROY. (*With his eyes still fixed on* LADY WELLS) And a very delightful one. I wish it had been made at my expense.

BLATCHFORD. I only hope the rebellion won't be?

VICEROY. (*Faintly interested at last*) Who is rebelling ?

BLATCHFORD. Bernard Shaw, as he calls himself—the man who was awakened.

VICEROY. (*Relapsing into frivolity*) Ungrateful wretch ! Is he out of his mind ?

BLATCHFORD. That is just what we say. He was invalided last night on suspicion, and he is now in the Municipal Hospital.

VICEROY. That explains it. (*Shakes his head at* LADY WELLS.) But what a sad waste !

KEIR-HARDIE. You don't seem to realize the gravity of the situation. For two hundred years this man has been revered by the Comrades as a demigod. They look up to him as the author of the present system, the Founder of the Social Commonwealth.

VICEROY. I should think they must be right, from what you tell me about him. You were quite right to have him invalided.

KEIR-HARDIE. But last night, just before his arrest, he had placed himself at the head of the Anti-Shavian League, an organization which aims at undoing his own work.

VICEROY. I see *he* has a sense of humour, at all events.

KEIR-HARDIE. He assured the meeting last night that he had none. He described himself as a mischievous crank.

VICEROY. And after that you accused him of mental deficiency ! It strikes me that they have invalided the wrong man.

MARCHIONESS. (*With emotion*) It was a sad necessity. A wife is the best judge. I was obliged to recognize that it would have been dangerous to leave my dear husband at large. He was on the point of leading his followers to wreck the Fabian Settlement.

VICEROY. Oh! I can quite see that you are sincere in thinking him insane.

BLATCHFORD. And after that he was going on to clear out the Houses of Parliament.

VICEROY. Why, he must be the sanest man in England!

KEIR-HARDIE. (*Spitefully*) And next, he said, they were to "tackle the Maharajah."

VICEROY. (*He starts to his feet, a marked change coming over his manner.*) What! Why didn't you tell me that at once? The man must be a dangerous lunatic. This is a very serious matter. Are you sure he can't escape from the hospital?

MARCHIONESS. That is what we came to see you about. He is safe there for the present, but the feeling in his favour is running very high among the Comrades, and we are afraid there may be a raid on the hospital at any moment, to rescue him.

VICEROY. This must be seen to at once. I must call out the peace-planes.

LADY WELLS. Won't you send for him instead?

VICEROY. (*Trembling*) Send for a violent madman who wants to tackle me?

MARCHIONESS. I don't think you will find him dangerous. These gentlemen will tell you that

the Marquis was quiet enough yesterday, when he was alone with us.

VICEROY. (*Somewhat reassured*) Oh, you didn't tell me he was a marquis. That makes a difference, of course. (*He sits down.*)

MARCHIONESS. He is the Marquis of Holloway by marriage. I can assure you my dear husband is not violent in private. A wife knows so well. We are all of opinion that it would be the wisest course for you to deal with him unofficially.

BLATCHFORD. It would cause great damage to property if the peace-planes had to operate against the Comrades in the streets.

LADY WELLS. Besides killing the poor things.

VICEROY. It might be just as well to wipe out these Anti-Shavians, though.

KEIR-HARDIE. (*Anxiously*) The Anti-Shavians would not be dangerous without Shaw. They have never given trouble before.

VICEROY. Very well. (*Rings. The Fabians sit up alertly, beginning to smile in anticipation.*) I will send for him. (*The Fabians laugh energetically.*) What the devil are you laughing at.

MARCHIONESS. (*Subduing her mirth*) Your Vice-Majesty touched the bell.

VICEROY. Are you mentally deficient? That was for my Munshi. (*The Fabians become grave. The* MUNSHI *enters.*) What hospital is he in?

BLATCHFORD. South-east Municipal District A. 2.

VICEROY. I am sick of that kind of talk. (*To the* MUNSHI.) Send my plane to the Westminster Hospital with an order to bring the Marquis of

Holloway here. And see that he is properly secured. (*The* MUNSHI *salaams and retires.*)

LADY WELLS. I will answer for him.

VICEROY. (*Returning to his sentimental vein*) Ah, but I can't let *you* be present when he comes. He has had *his* turn.

MARCHIONESS. It will be far better for Your Vice-Majesty to see him alone. If anything were to happen to my poor husband it would be too painful for me to be there.

VICEROY. We had better speak plainly. What exactly do you ask me to do ?

MARCHIONESS. (*Takes out a large white handkerchief. To* BLATCHFORD) You must tell him. (*She conceals her face in the handkerchief.*)

BLATCHFORD. We think it would be much the best way out of the difficulty if the Marquis were to pass away peacefully in an apoplectic fit. (*The* MARCHIONESS *gives a loud sob.*)

VICEROY. (*He and* BLATCHFORD *exchange looks of intelligence.*) I see. You have heard that troublesome visitors sometimes have an apoplectic fit in my office ?

BLATCHFORD. From which they never recover.

MARCHIONESS. (*In a doleful voice, but yet gradually overcoming her grief*) We have no wish to pry into your administrative methods. They appear to work admirably.

VICEROY. Well, I don't mind letting you into the secret, as I see I can count on your loyalty. You see this button. (*The Fabians come forward and inspect it at a respectful distance, with looks of admiration.*)

MARCHIONESS. (*Still rather melancholy*) Wonderful! Most ingenious! So simple! (*The Fabians move back to their seats, murmuring their admiration.*)

VICEROY. (*As they are sitting down again*) Yes, quite simple. It is connected with one of those chairs—(*The Fabians all start to their feet, with marks of strong emotion.*) It is all right. It can't act unless I press the button.

MARCHIONESS. It is really time we were going. I am afraid we are trespassing on your kindness.

VICEROY. (*To* LADY WELLS) Surely *you* won't desert me? You don't think I could harm *you*? Besides, it isn't your chair. I shall feel offended if you don't trust me. (LADY WELLS *sits nervously on the extreme edge of her chair. The others hesitate.*)

MARCHIONESS. (*In an insinuating voice, while making a show of sitting down*) And which chair is it?

VICEROY. That. (*Points to hers. She stands up abruptly, while Lords* BLATCHFORD *and* KEIR-HARDIE *cautiously resume their seats.*) Please sit down. I assure you the chair is perfectly safe.

MARCHIONESS. I feel sure it would be for anybody else. But I have never understood machinery.

VICEROY. But it is so easy. While I am talking I put out my hand so. (*While speaking he lays his hand on the edge of the table, so that the button is within reach of his finger. The* MARCHIONESS *jumps, and hastily moves away from the chair.*) I am sorry to see you so distrustful. (*He withdraws his hand in a huff.*)

MARCHIONESS. Not in the very least! But I have just remembered—(*Puts the handkerchief to her eyes again*)—I have to see about my mourning immediately.

VICEROY. (*Still offended*) It is a pity I explained the arrangement.

MARCHIONESS. Don't say that. I am extremely thankful you did.

VICEROY. You don't seem to like it. (*A knock.*) Come in!

MARCHIONESS. (*Eagerly*) Let me open the door.

She makes a dash for it, but before she gets there it is opened from without by the MUNSHI.

MUNSHI. Her Highness the Permanent Prime Ministress.

The MARCHIONESS, *seeing a way out of the danger, remains quiescent. The* VICEROY *rises as the* PRIME MINISTRESS *enters, attended by the* PERMANENT LADY'S MAID, *and goes forward, extending his hand to be kissed. The Fabians also stand up. The* PRIME MINISTRESS *begins nervously shaking the proffered hand.*

LADY'S MAID. No, not that way. You must kiss it.

PRIME MINISTRESS. (*Looks at it doubtfully*) Oughtn't he to wash it first?

VICEROY. (*Withdrawing the insulted member*) Her Highness seems more *distrait* than usual this morning. Her responsibilities seem to be getting

too much for her. (*To* MUNSHI.) Give Her Highness a chair. (*He resumes his own seat.*)

MARCHIONESS. (*As the* MUNSHI *is about to obey*) Let Her Highness have *my* seat. (*Pointing to it.*)

LADY'S MAID. Your Excellency is very thoughtful. (*She conducts the* PRIME MINISTRESS *to the fixed chair, and stands behind it, resting her hands on the back. The Fabians sit down as formerly, but in doing so they contrive to edge their chairs a good deal further away from the point of danger. The* MARCHIONESS *sinks thankfully into a chair beside the door, as the* MUNSHI *goes out.*) Her Highness has waited on Your Vice-Majesty in consequence of the disturbed state of the people.

VICEROY. (*Seeing his opportunity*) Ah, yes, you mean about this man who has awakened?

LADY'S MAID. Yes, Your Vice-Majesty. He was invalided last night, and the——

VICEROY. Not so fast. Let us have the facts clearly. He had been asleep for a long time, hadn't he? (*Winks at the Fabians, who respond with sickly smiles.*)

LADY'S MAID. Yes, Your Vice-Majesty.

VICEROY. (*Smiling, with his hand on the bell*) How long had he been asleep? (*The Fabians begin giggling.*)

LADY'S MAID. (*Little understanding what is expected of her*) I don't know, Your Vice-Majesty. (*A faint tinkle is drawn from the bell, as the* VICEROY *withdraws his hand in bitter disappointment. The Fabians rock with sycophantic laughter.*

VICEROY. (*Furious*) Fool! (*The Fabians*

promptly cut short their mistimed mirth. The LADY'S MAID *is bewildered.*)

MARCHIONESS. (*With a courtier's zeal*) Two hundred years.

VICEROY. Then I should think it was about time he did wake. (*This time the Fabians hesitate till the* VICEROY *gives the signal by laughing himself, when they give way to almost unnatural merriment. The* LADY'S MAID *and* PRIME MINISTRESS, *thoroughly disconcerted, exchange looks of dismay.*)

PRIME MINISTRESS. What are they all laughing at ?

VICEROY. (*To* LADY'S MAID) It is perfectly evident that Her Highness is in great need of rest. I shall communicate with the Medical Board.

LADY'S MAID. I beg Your Vice-Majesty's pardon. You may not know that Her Highness is the President of the Board, *ex officio*. She obtained full marks in Mental Pathology. (*The* VICEROY *is silenced.*) She is naturally worried by this affair.

VICEROY. That is all right. I have discussed the matter with Their Excellencies already. You may tell the Government that I am taking measures to put an end to the danger.

LADY'S MAID. Her Highness is very anxious to avoid calling out the peace-planes.

VICEROY. I don't think that will be necessary. I have sent for the Marquis of Holloway to come here. (*He and the* LADY'S MAID *exchange looks of intelligence.*)

PRIME MINISTRESS. Oh, then, I'm going!

LADY'S MAID. You shall directly. (*To* VICEROY) Her Highness has been dreading the prospect of having him for her husband.

VICEROY. (*Kindly, to* PRIME MINISTRESS) You needn't be afraid, my dear. I have strong grounds for thinking that the illness from which he is suffering will shortly terminate fatally.

PRIME MINISTRESS. (*Disappointed, to* LADY'S MAID) You promised me you would ask the Viceroy to kill him.

LADY'S MAID. Hush! That is what His Vice-Majesty means.

PRIME MINISTRESS. (*To* VICEROY) Oh, thank you. Do, please, tell me how you do it.

VICEROY. If you are sure that it won't frighten you. This button—(*The* PRIME MINISTRESS *and* LADY'S MAID *lean forward to peer round the corner of the table*)—is connected with the chair in which you are sitting. (*The* LADY'S MAID *withdraws her hands, and jumps back with a scream. Her mistress remains absorbed in the explanation.*) I have only to press the button, *so* (*Touches it with his finger*), and you go off.

PRIME MINISTRESS. (*Much delighted*) How very, very funny! Do let me see you do it.

VICEROY. I thought you objected to wait for the Marquis.

PRIME MINISTRESS. Oh, never mind him. (*To* LADY'S MAID) Quick, go and fetch a Comrade.

MARCHIONESS. (*In tones of mournful anxiety*) Will there be enough electricity for two?

LADY'S MAID. (*Looking towards the window*) I think this is his lordship.

PRIME MINISTRESS. (*Rises in great alarm*) Oh, please excuse me, everybody. I have got to open a bazaar.

All rise. As the PRIME MINISTRESS *and* LADY'S MAID *hurry out by the door, the plane draws up outside, and* MR. SHAW *comes in through the window. He is dressed in the costume of a clown in the old-fashioned pantomimes, and his wrists and ankles are fettered by chains which clank as he moves.*

LADY WELLS. The Master !

MR. SHAW. (*Rattles his chains.*) I am glad you think so. I was rather afraid you might mistake me for a slave.

MARCHIONESS. My poor Bernard ! (*Sobs.*)

BLATCHFORD. We have no slaves left in Merrie England.

MR. SHAW. You still seem to have a few liars. (*Looks round smiling.*) Is this the Maharajah ? (*His manner shows that he has not been trained in the deference due from an Englishman to one of the ruling race.*)

VICEROY. (*With dignity*) I am the Viceroy of this Dependency. You may be seated. (*Waves his hand towards the chair of doom, and sits down himself.*)

LADY WELLS. (*As* MR. SHAW *is about to take a different chair*) Not there ! Sit by me !

MR. SHAW. (*Beguiled by the temptress*) I am

not entitled to till this day fortnight. (*Takes the chair, the Fabians standing by. To the* VICEROY) I must really congratulate you on your aeroplane. (*Yawns.*) That ride through the air has made me quite sleepy.

VICEROY. (*Starting joyfully as he sees a fresh opening*) I heard that you were a sound sleeper. They tell me you have only just awakened from a sleep of—how long was it? (*Beams on the Fabians, who break into expectant grins.*)

MR. SHAW. Two hundred years; so it is about time I did awake, isn't it? (*The smiles of the Fabians freeze on their lips.*)

VICEROY. (*Heart-broken*) Damn![1] (*With sudden sternness*) Let me have no unbecoming levity, if you please. This is not a Court of Law. I suppose you know what you are suspected of?

MR. SHAW. Yes. In such a society as this I feel it a compliment to be told that I am abnormal. (*Jumps up.*) But I really can't sit here while these ladies are standing. (*To the* MARCHIONESS) Won't you take this chair?

MARCHIONESS. I would not deprive you of it for worlds.

VICEROY. Be good enough to resume your seat. (*To the Fabians*) I think you may leave the Marquis with me. But be in the next room in case I should want you.

The MARCHIONESS *puts her handkerchief to her eyes as she is going out, but takes it away to make signs to the other*

[1] To be altered to "Dash!" in the copy submitted to the Censor.

three that they should remove their chairs out of MR. SHAW'S *reach. They place them back against the wall, and go out, the* MARCHIONESS *leading the way with her head bowed in grief.*

MR. SHAW. (*Sitting again*) You seem to be the real Master.

VICEROY. Sir, your manner is very familiar. Do you realize that you are in the presence of the representative of India ?

MR. SHAW. Do you realize that you are in the presence of an Englishman ? But of course not : how could you ? I have outlived my species. (*Drops his head in his hands.*)

VICEROY. It is a pity you didn't think of that before. You ought to be more sensible—at your age. Come, I have every wish to make allowance for your extraordinary situation, but the sooner you realize that your life is in my hands, the better for you. (*He rests his hand on the edge of the desk, beside the button.*)

MR. SHAW. (*Jumps up.*) What, do you mean to tell me that there are no laws in this wretched Commonwealth ?

VICEROY. (*Moves his hand away unconsciously in turning to point to the Acts of Parliament.*) Millions of laws. They pass them at the rate of a bushel a day. But they don't apply to me, of course.

MR. SHAW. Why not ? (*Yawns.*)

VICEROY. Because I belong to the Viceroys'

Trade Union. I am the only member. But do sit down.

MR. SHAW. (*Sitting*) I belong to the Authors' Society.

VICEROY. I am sorry for you. Authors have been abolished, I believe, for about a hundred and fifty years, on the ground that their labour was unproductive.

MR. SHAW. I ought to have guessed that. Then does no one write books any longer ?

VICEROY. I am not sure if the law actually forbids writing. However they are allowed to print them, though of course they are only paid for the actual type-setting. The time they waste in thinking is deducted.

MR. SHAW. It was coming to that in my time. I only wonder the law doesn't forbid thinking.

VICEROY. That would be quite unnecessary in a Social Commonwealth. (MR. SHAW *laughs. The* VICEROY *is gratified.*) Come, I am sure you are perfectly harmless.

MR. SHAW. (*Not quite pleased*) What makes you think that ?

VICEROY. Because you have a sense of humour. No humorist ever yet made a revolution.

MR. SHAW. And yet they tell me I am responsible for this Commonwealth. I am afraid it is a very bad joke.

VICEROY. Then why try to repeat it ? Besides, what do you suppose that you could do against me ? (*Places his hand as before.*) I have only to call out my peace-planes, and lay London in ashes.

MR. SHAW. What are peace-planes ?

VICEROY. Armoured planes carrying bombs.

MR. SHAW. Why don't you call them war-planes ?

VICEROY. Because we wish to show our respect for humanitarian teaching—your teaching, you know. (*Smiles.* MR. SHAW *smiles in response. Both begin laughing, and the* VICEROY *withdraws his hand, and leans back in his chair.*) My dear Marquis, I can see that you are one of the right sort, really. You're too good a man to go about stirring up the natives. They won't thank you. Why not leave them alone, and emigrate to some civilized country like India ? I will give you introductions to some of my friends, who will be delighted to put you up. (*Sotto voce*) I have got a little supper on to-night, if you like to come. (*Puts his hand beside his mouth, and adds something in a whisper.*[1])

MR. SHAW. (*Draws back indignantly*) I am surprised at you. Besides, you forget that I am on my honeymoon. I cannot go anywhere without the Marchioness.

VICEROY. Not when you are called by the Life Force ?

MR. SHAW. You have no right to throw my discredited doctrines in my teeth like that. You make me all the more determined to undo the mischief I have done. (*Yawns.*)

VICEROY. My good sir, you will only make bad worse. But you reformers are never satisfied.

[1] If the Censor wants to know what, remind him of his own motto —*Honi soit qui mal y pense.*

You took these unfortunate people out of the frying-pan, and they fell into the fire; and now they have got used to the fire you want to take them out and put them back in the frying-pan. Why not leave them alone?

MR. SHAW. (*In a tone of apology*) My life has always been devoted to the service of my fellow men.

VICEROY. That accounts for their chaining you up. If you were a true philosopher you would only be amused by their mechanical millennium.

MR. SHAW. (*Warmly*) Amused by human suffering! (*The* VICEROY *starts, and puts out his hand as before, but takes it away again, as* MR. SHAW *is on his feet too quickly for him.*) Man, have you no human feeling?

VICEROY. (*Offended*) What was that you called me?

MR. SHAW. Ah, so you don't call yourself a man?

VICEROY. Certainly not.

MR. SHAW. Then what are you, pray?

VICEROY. A Superman.

MR. SHAW. (*Sinks back into his chair*) Frankenstein!

VICEROY. (*His hand steals towards the button.*) I am really reluctant to take strong measures. If you will give me your undertaking to go quietly, I will deport you as an undesirable.

MR. SHAW. Where to? Is there any country that would take me?

VICEROY. They will be very glad to have you in South Africa.

MR. SHAW. No! (*He jumps up. The Viceroy makes a move to press the button, but is too late again, and draws back disappointed.*) Let me first make a public recantation of my teaching.

VICEROY. But your recantation is worse than your teaching.

MR. SHAW. (*Advances to the table.*) I decline your offer. I will not be smuggled away by you, or their Medical Board. While I have breath to speak—(*Yawns*)—I will speak.

VICEROY. If you want me to listen to you you must sit down.

MR. SHAW. Why should I sit down? (*He thumps the table with his manacled fist. The* VICEROY *manifests increasing alarm.*) I see your contrivance. I know why you have brought me here. You mean to get rid of me privately. Well, you shan't. (*He is drawing back to his chair when he notices the* VICEROY'S *hand cautiously approaching the button.*) Stop! (*The* VICEROY *starts violently, withdrawing his hand by spontaneous nervous reflex action.*) If you touch that bell—(*The clock begins to strike twelve.* MR. SHAW *yawns.*)—I will throttle you—(*Yawn*)—in the name of—(*Yawn*)—Humanity!

As the clock finishes striking, the incantation by which LADY WELLS *released him from the spell of the wicked Palmist runs out, and* MR. SHAW *relapses into the magical sleep for ever.*

As he sinks down helplessly into his chair, the good-natured VICEROY *stays the*

hand which he had been extending towards the lethal button, and lays it on the bell instead.

VICEROY. I'm damned if he hasn't gone to sleep again. (*Rings.*) And about time, too, I —(*Pulls himself up suddenly and smiles, as he sees his way to success at last.*)

The Fabians come in softly to slow music; LADY WELLS *first, sniffling, but with a grief which looks for consolation, into a tiny handkerchief of delicate lace; Lords* BLATCHFORD *and* KEIR-HARDIE *next, with the sad but resolute air of men who have done their duty; and the* MARCHIONESS *last, clad in deep crape and widow's weeds, and leaning for support on the arm of the* MUNSHI, *who is amazed by the depth of her affliction.*

VICEROY. You may put your idol to bed again.

MARCHIONESS. (*Between her sobs*) Is he *quite* dead ?

LADY WELLS. (*Going towards* MR. SHAW) Dear Master !

VICEROY. Here, what are you going to do ?

LADY WELLS. Only to give him one last kiss.

VICEROY. No ! You mustn't do that on any account.

LADY WELLS. (*Flattered*) You need not be jealous of the dead.

VICEROY. But he isn't dead. (*The Fabians are astonished and dismayed. The sobs of the* MARCHIONESS *cease suddenly.*) He has fallen back

into his infernal slumber, and this time I hope you'll have the sense to let him sleep it out.

MARCHIONESS. Then he is mine for ever!

LADY WELLS. But I don't understand. How did he come to go off again.

BLATCHFORD. Don't you see? Before you kissed him you uttered the wish that he should wake for twenty-four hours. (*Points to the clock.*) The twenty-four hours have just expired, and so he has gone to sleep again.

VICEROY. (*Ringing his bell triumphantly*) AND I SHOULD THINK IT WAS ABOUT TIME HE DID GO TO SLEEP! (*Hysterical laughter, in which the audience is allowed to join.* MR. SHAW *slowly turns his head and winks at the house, to signify that they have not yet heard the last of him.*)

CURTAIN.

[*Followed by numerous recalls, shouts of* "Author," *and favourable notices in the next day's papers.*]

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